A PAINTER'S PROGRESS

WILL H. LOW

THE SCAMMON LECTURES

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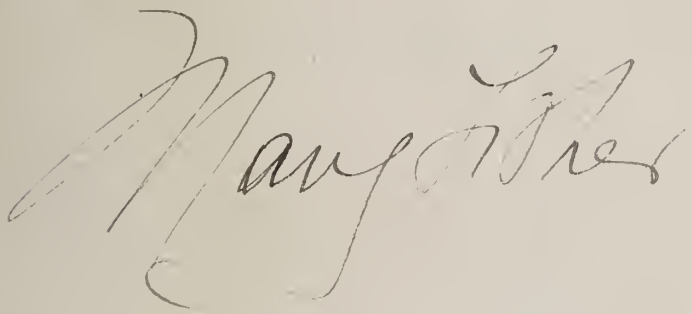

A PAINTER'S PROGRESS

BOOKS BY WILL H. LOW

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"Prosperity Under the Law": Decorative panel in Luzerne County Court House, Wilkes-Barre, Pa., by Will H. Low, 1909

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BEING

A PARTIAL SURVEY ALONG THE PATHWAY OF ART IN AMERICA AND EUROPE WITH SUNDRY EXAMPLES AND PRECEPTS CULLED FROM PERSONAL ENCOUNTER WITH EXISTING CONDITIONS AND REFERENCE TO THE CAREERS OF MANY ARTISTS BOTH ANCIENT AND MODERN: SIX DISCOURSES FORMING THE FIFTH ANNUAL SERIES OF

THE SCAMMON LECTURES

DELIVERED BEFORE THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, APRIL, 1910, BY

WILL H. LOW

WITH SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS SELECTED BY THE AUTHOR

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To

MARY FAIRCHILD LOW

"This is the life we have chosen; well, the choice was mad, but I should make it again"

NOTE

THE papers herewith printed formed the fifth of the series of lectures given under the Scammon Foundation before the students and members of the Art Institute of Chicago. By bequest of Mrs. Maria Sheldon Scammon, the Scammon Lectures were established on a permanent basis in 1901 in memory of Mr. John Young Scammon, a former prominent citizen of Chicago. The will prescribes that these lectures shall be on "the history, theory, and practice of the fine arts (meaning thereby, the graphic and plastic arts), by persons of distinction or authority on the subject of which they lecture."

As here presented, these lectures have been revised as little as is consistent with the demands of formal publication, from a desire to retain as nearly as possible their character of familiar talks by an elder to a group of younger artists.

W. H. L.

Lawrence Park, Bronxville,
September, 1910.

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I

THE AWAKENING OF VOCATION

When one whose life from his earliest years has been devoted to art is called from the preoccupation of active production to prepare a series of lectures upon some theme connected with the "history, theory, and practice of the fine arts," the comprehensive programme—to say nothing of the elasticity of the catholic mind—suggests at once a score of subjects. The modern artist is the heir of the ages. Since the world began a certain type of man has been active with the desire to depict upon a plane surface, or to mould in some material, images of the life to

which our eyes open with the dawn of intelligence. Consequently in painting and sculpture alone there are vast stores of what we classify as manifestations of art, which we have subdivided into works of schools or epochs, as this first instinctive effort of man has taken form; each possessing significance to the generation of to-day, after their original appeal to the contemporary world for which they were fashioned. Three primary colours, or a mass of ductile clay, have sufficed for the production of the greatest as of the least of these; when these simple materials have been vitalised by the touch of a hand informed with the receptive quality, partly intuitive, partly intellectual—which we recognise as the artistic temperament.

But, if these simple means of production have varied little since art began, the product is so various that the embarrassment of choice is manifest. No matter how

little one may specialise, a life of active work precludes the possibility of thorough familiarity with the entire field of art, and it is only here and there, and as the fruitful yield may serve his purposes, that the busy artist may glean or can in turn make profitable the garnered harvest to others; first, and most legitimately, by the exercise of his craft, and secondly through the medium of words. In this the artist differs from the critic, whose equipment pretends to embrace all phases, all schools, and all epochs of art, to reduce to order the vast differences that conflicting ideals have engendered, and to prove by the whole long history of art a sequential and logical theory. Leaving aside all question of the number of critics who have succeeded in such a task, it may be granted at once that the convictions born of practice prevent the artist from so dispassionate a view of his craft.

Therefore whatever subject the prac-

titioner treats, when, as in the present instance, he deserts the palette for the pen, it will be found to be strongly tinctured by the personal equation. Upon the other hand the graphic and plastic arts are so essentially crafts, their every exercise is so controlled by intricate and special technical laws, that I have yet to find an artist young or old who would not prefer the discussion of his art with a brother of his craft to the most learned disquisition by the most sapient of critics.

Though I would not in the least minimise the importance of the intellectual equipment of the artist, his intuitive, temperamental quality, that which we call his personality, is his most precious possession. With this he is born, not made, and it so governs his entire activity in production that it permeates not only his manner of vision but all his technical methods as well; and to talk of art, understandingly, to the artist it is abso-

lutely necessary to be of the family, to use the same materials, to share in this nice and intimate correlation between the inner and spiritual grace of his mental conception, and the outward and visible sign of the skill of his hand. Now, while this may demonstrate the fitness of an artist to speak with his fellows, quite irrespective of the quality or character of his individual work, and by extension may carry to those who as laymen are interested in art some more intimate knowledge of the artist's point of view, the choice of a particular theme remains difficult, among the many which offer themselves to one who has always lived in touch with art and artists here and abroad; who has travelled and passed many hours in museums and galleries; who has lived by his art from the first, meeting conditions as they have grown in his path; and who, having a long look backward, has unfailing constancy, and

perhaps greater hope, in the forward outlook.

With cogitations such as these I had long considered the proposition to prepare the Scammon Lectures when the thought came: "What would I at the outset of my career have most cared to hear from an artist of experience?" With this query my hesitation was at an end, as I recalled how eagerly I questioned the future in my youth—and how few there were to give me answer.

Consequently I have determined to look backward on my own life, to venture to consider myself fairly typical, and to describe as comprehensively as I may be able the awakening of the art instinct, the first tentative efforts in a typical American city, the experiences of a student in Europe, and the growth of our art during the past thirty years. For this I shali draw largely on my own experiences and seek to describe the condi-

tions which, presumably, a student of to-day will encounter, but I shall be able to supplement the merely personal experiences with instances drawn from my knowledge of other careers both at home and abroad; and in the end I may, perhaps, add a useful guidepost at the point where our Western prolongation continues the much-travelled highway of art.

I have said that the modern artist is the heir of the ages, and this is particularly true of the American artist. The world has never known such growth in material power and territorial expansion as this country has seen, since the day when a few earnest patriots gathered in Philadelphia on July 4, 1776, and in memorable words formally resolved to sever the ties that bound them to the Old World. From the little fringe of unimportant towns then scattered along the Atlantic coast this sparse population, in-

creasing, has spread over the continent, until now from sunrise to sunset a great New World basks in the sunshine of freedom and prosperity. With this increase in material power there have grown certain traits of character which we are prone to consider essentially American. We are resourceful and self-reliant, we begin in all things at the point where others have left off, we accept the heritage of the ages, and proceed to adopt for our own uses customs and ideals from all the peoples of the Old World, and in an inconceivably short time this heritage, the outgrowth of centuries of effort, though somewhat changed in the process, is incorporated into our national life. A single generation suffices to make as homogeneous and American as he whose ancestors came over in the *Mayflower*, him whose living parents still preserve the accent and the language of the country of their birth—in the aggregate coun-

tries as various as the hues in which they are pictured upon the map of the world.

It was in this manner that art came to the New World, nor did it linger in its advent, for we find one of the sturdy patriots who signed the Declaration of Independence writing, just one year after that historic event took place, on July 4, 1777, to be precise, to a native painter in terms that are certainly prophetic. This interesting letter was written by Benjamin Franklin to Charles Wilson Peale, and its quaint and shrewd advice is as typical of its writer's worldly wisdom as its prophecy proves his far-seeing intelligence. Franklin writes in these terms: "If I were to advise you it should be by great industry and frugality to secure a competency, for as your profession requires good eyes and cannot so well be followed with spectacles, and therefore will not probably afford subsistence

as long as some other employments, you have a right to claim proportionally large rewards while you continue to exercise it to general satisfaction. The arts have always travelled westward, and there is no doubt of their flourishing hereafter on our side of the Atlantic as the number of wealthy inhabitants will increase who may be able and willing suitably to reward them; since from several instances it appears that our people are not deficient in genius."

The recipient of this letter was not "deficient in genius," as many of his works remain to prove, though talent and industry would be our more modern way of phrasing his particular qualities. In point of resourcefulness, however, few men have excelled him, for his biographer tells us that in his varied career he was "saddle and harness maker, clock and watch maker; painter in oils, crayon, miniature, modeller in clay, wax, and

plaster; he sawed the ivory for his miniatures, moulded the glass to cover and made the 'shagreen' cases to hold them; was a soldier, legislator, and lecturer, a taxidermist and dentist"; and, the chronicler prettily adds, was "a mild, benevolent, and good man."

I like to think of this forefather of our craft as typical of his fellows of to-day, for the far-reaching resourcefulness of our endeavour is not only a most useful asset to the material well-being of the artist, but it lifts him morally from the ranks of those who depend upon the favour of the rich as purveyors of luxuries, and plants him firmly on his feet among the workers of the world, who are busy with the beauty of use. It will be noted that even Franklin saw no hope for our future art except as wealth might be "able and willing" to patronise it. It is possible that a few years later, after his long residence in France, he may have conceived an art

that flourished for a nobler reason than this; but from the first it is to the credit of our craft in this country that we have met the conditions of life on an equality with other citizens and have willingly gone into the market-place, bending our endeavour to every condition of use, and without fear or favour of the wealthy have succeeded or failed in the degree that we have been able to make our art desirable to the country at large.

England had been our mother country in every save a political sense, and our first artists received their training there; but though the art of that country was then dependent upon the patronage of the nobility and gentry, our men no sooner returned home than their efforts tended to a larger appeal. With us every one worked, the large majority with their hands, for even the greatest merchant of the time "tended store," and no one was the less considered because he was in

trade. Of course then as even now the chief activity of the figure painter was in portrait painting, but in many cases the resourceful artist turned his talents to account in a manner to enlist the interest of the general public. Panoramas were painted and successfully exhibited by many of our earlier men. Robert Fulton, before his interest in steam navigation caused his desertion of painting, was the author of several of these, as was John Vanderlyn. Vanderlyn, unlike the majority of his confrères, had gone to France for his training, and contemporary judgment would confirm the statement of Aaron Burr, on Vanderlyn's return from his studies, that he was among the men of his time "pronounced the first painter that now is or ever has been in America."

With many of our earlier men a tinge of patriotism is necessary to find much of interest in their work, but in the case of

Vanderlyn the fact that in the Salon exhibition of 1805 he was awarded a medal, in the company of such works as the "Coronation of Napoleon," by David, and "Justice Pursuing Crime," by Prudhon, is amply justified by the merit of his work. On his return to this country he found that we had enough public interest in art to consider the embellishment of our National Capitol, and indeed John Trumbull was soon to be at work upon large canvases for its rotunda, though it was not until 1846 that Vanderlyn found employment there, when his hand had lost its cunning and this country by dilatory action had lost the opportunity of securing an adequate example of the work of our first well-trained painter. But in the interval he and other men had profited by the hunger for art of some description other than that of the portrait, and a number of large works were produced which, exhibited throughout the

country, brought fair returns to their authors.

One such work, "The Court of Death," by Rembrandt Peale, the son of the earlier painter to whom Franklin's letter was addressed, brought in through its exhibition in different cities the sum of $8,880 in one year. We may now see this work in the Detroit Museum of Art, and feel a pathetic interest in the desire for art which contributed to this handsome result. It is on record that the Common Council of the City of New York adjourned in a body to view this picture, and I fear that, though we have progressed in our art since that time, the day is far distant when the city fathers of New York or Chicago will pay a like tribute to any of *our* works.

An equal recognition of the public appeal of art to our less sophisticated forefathers is to be found in the record that the first exhibition of the National Academy of Design in 1826—a beggarly array

of a few over a hundred works shown in a room lit by three gas-lights—was "formally opened in the presence of His Excellency Governor Clinton and suite, His Honor the Mayor and the Common Council of the City of New York, the Judges of the Courts, and the Faculty of Columbia College."

Nor, a little later, was there lack of more material recognition of our home art. In 1838 there was formed in New York an association entitled the "American Art Union." Its object was to encourage the arts by the purchase of pictures and their distribution by lottery among its members, each of whom paid into its treasury five dollars per annum. For this sum they received a publication devoted to the fine arts, a premium of a steel engraving which the union caused to be made from some one of the pictures purchased, and a chance in the lottery by which all these paintings

were distributed among the members. It was undoubtedly illegal, but many among our prominent citizens served as its directors, and benevolent justice avoided noticing its infraction of our laws for a dozen years. A permanent exhibition gallery was established on Broadway, and the success of the ingenious scheme was so great that in 1849 the Art Union enrolled 18,690 members and expended in the purchase of paintings $83,000. Other times, other manners, and this interesting evidence of public interest in art probably deserved the death it met when an offended newspaper found it to its profit to invoke existing laws and so destroy it. But it would be interesting to compare the sum quoted above with the aggregate returns from sales in all the various exhibitions held throughout our country to-day.

Personally I have a tender memory for the activities of the American Art Union,

though it was twenty-five years after it ceased to exist that I remember in my parents' house some of the engravings issued to its yearly subscribers, and certain of the paintings distributed by the hand of fortune which had found permanent homes in Albany. They were the first pictures that I knew, and, in the dearth of all other expressions of art, they were studied with an attention that later on the treasures of the Louvre or the Uffizi could scarce elicit.

The youth awakening to a sense of art to-day, in no matter how remote a locality in our broad land, can scarcely form an idea of the change that has come within forty years in the diffusion of adequate representations of works of art. The photograph, and its mechanical reproduction, have put within the reach of the student virtually all that has been done in art, and, lacking the colour, the museums of Europe, the current produc-

tions exhibited in all the cities of the world, are within the reach of all students. I can remember in the early seventies, when I was already engaged in drawing for illustration in New York, how a single photograph from a Salon picture would be passed from hand to hand among the younger artists, and provoke more discussion than would the entire illustrated catalogue of the same exhibition to-day. Later, in Paris, photography had by no means culled all the flowers from the rich gardens of art existing in the museums of Europe. The reproductions by half-tone were unknown, and engravings in outline or slightly indicated shadow, giving no hint of the complete effect of a picture, were thought to suffice for the purposes of the student. How eagerly the first photographs from the Prado were welcomed! And though their price was beyond the means of the student, yet, by some heroic measure like

going without your dinner, you might become the happy possessor of a photograph from Velasquez.

During the Civil War and the few years after that witnessed my first halting efforts, Velasquez was virtually an unknown name to us here. Yet I was the child of gentle and cultured parents, and the names of the great artists were not altogether unfamiliar in the circle where I was reared. Michelangelo, Raphael, and Rubens and the earlier American artists Gilbert Stuart, Benjamin West, and Washington Allston were spoken of—all names of visionary beings who had dwelt in some enchanted land, more kindly than any I could ever hope to penetrate; where, after long years of patient study, their genius had blossomed and borne the fruit of perfect works of art. Some of the works of West and Allston my mother had seen; probably in their exhibition through the country these had

come to Albany, and her description of West's "Death on the Pale Horse" thrilled me in a way that was scarce repeated when many years after I saw the picture myself.

One tale of West, apocryphal perhaps, but pertinent to what I have already said of the self-respecting attitude of the American artist, comes back to me as I may have heard it from my mother's lips. The little Benjamin, possessing scant share of Quaker humility, was met walking one day by another youth who, mounted on a horse, offered him a seat behind him. "I'll not ride behind any one," asserted Benjamin, whereupon his friend gave him the more honourable seat. As they jogged along the talk turned on their future occupations. "I shall be an artist," declared the Quaker youth. "An artist? What's that?" "An artist is the companion of kings and emperors," spoke Ambition. "But we have no kings and

emperors over here," objected the more prosaic youth, to which West replied prophetically, "Then I will go and find them," and then pursued, "What will you be?" "A tailor," replied his friend. "Let me down," shouted the future *protégé* of George the Third. "I'll not ride with a tailor."

Alas, humiliating as is the confession, I had no such high ambition. I had, indeed, in my sixth or seventh year essayed the higher forms of composition. War was rife upon the land, and I suppose in common with thousands of my young compatriots, I had depicted many gory combats; at first upon my slate and then in more studied works in water-colour, where the stars and stripes, the blue of the uniforms, and a plentiful use of vermilion for the accidents of war, exhausted the resources of my Winsor & Newton colour box. I even remember the awakening of a keen artistic rivalry, when my

mother pronounced one of these works to be inferior to a similar battle-piece executed by one of my cousins, and the resulting determination to do better than he, which effort was soon rewarded with the preference of the same sagacious, though possibly prejudiced, critic.

But such efforts were only those which any child with no pronounced vocation may attempt, though as they form my earliest recollections they seemed as serious to me then as later work which, as a child of larger growth, I have attempted.

What is quite certain is that as my intelligence developed the sense of the magnitude of the life task that I had set myself grew in proportion. With the diffusion of art and knowledge of its processes that is general to-day here, I doubt if a fairly intelligent child could be as ignorant of the steps leading to the production of the average picture as I was. We now see that the average artist is quite an ordinary

person, but to me at the age of ten or twelve any one who could paint a picture wore a nimbus and quite transcended ordinary mortality. As I shall show by example later on, such ignorance would not have been possible to a little peasant boy in France, but the wide dissemination of literature in our country, which results in a species of culture much more general than exists in Europe, still leaves great lapses with us in the matter of art.

In the days of which I speak those about me, to whom the names of the great artists of the past were familiar enough, had no such knowledge of their aim, of the manner of their education, or even their relation to the environment in which they lived, as they had of the great writers whose works were within their reach.

Had I cherished any such ambition, for instance, I should have known by precept and instruction just how to go about

it to become a Shakespeare; but to tread in the path of Michelangelo there was a vast uncharted country to cross even to approach the nebulous land where he dwelt; and there was no one to guide me. This I fancy even now might not be an uncommon plight for a child in unartistic surroundings, but the means of a better knowledge are certainly more easy to procure.

But to dabble in colour by any means was a delight in itself, and I therefore centred my youthful ambition upon the trade of the sign painter. And here I believe that I developed a sense which is somewhat unusual. As I took my walks abroad I studied the work of the various sign painters with such attention that I soon became so conversant with the varying styles of the artists then practising that hitherto unclassified branch in Albany, that I did not need to consult the modest signature upon their productions

to determine the designer of a given work. Within a few years I could still discover in places in my native city weather-beaten signs, surviving since these childish days, and ascribe to them the forgotten names of the painters. There was living there at that time also one who was probably quite an ordinary decorator, a German who practised so-called fresco-painting. He was the artist of a row of simulated statues, standing in painted niches around the walls of a hall where concerts and other entertainments were given. On the rare occasions that I was taken there, the artifice of shadows by which these figures appeared to stand out from the recessed niches, which seemed to recede, realised for me the last word of artistic proficiency. When this simple old workman was pointed out in the street I fairly reverenced him, and felt that my native city was honoured by his presence. I do not think that I ex-

aggerate, in thus insisting on these very youthful memories, for they remain very vivid to my recollection and seem to embody the struggle toward a light that, veiled and flickering though it may be, shines alluringly at the end of the pathway of adolescence; which many a child follows gropingly and blindly, but with set purpose.

To-day, almost intuitively, the youthful aspirant would know enough to go to nature and try his 'prentice hand in drawing simple objects, or failing such intuition even our public schools put the possible future artist upon this logical path; but the youth that I have best known had no such luck. A little later I put all my immediate relations under tribute by making rapid sketches from them, but for the most part my early efforts were purely imaginative. I naturally opened my eyes to the world about me and in a fugitive manner tried to store my memory with

the aspect of natural objects, and to learn by this cursory method the structure and movement of the human figure. It was to be a number of years before I sat myself down to draw before a plaster cast from a statue; which remaining immovable and fixed affords the logical method of acquiring knowledge of the figure.

Let me say parenthetically, however, that this early reliance upon observation, becoming a fixed habit, I have found to be of use throughout life. I have observed later, when engaged in teaching, that a large majority of students depend almost entirely upon their ability to copy what is put before them, without cultivating the memory of what they draw. Frequently in a life class the student is unable to reconstruct from memory a figure in the identical posture of the model from whom his study was drawn. There has grown, moreover, owing to this slavish reliance upon the copy from nature, a

prejudice among a great number of artists against working from memory or, as the vernacular of the studio puts it, from "chic." If we reflect that from the time that the eye observes the object in nature, and then in turn follows the hand that puts down the result of such observation, an appreciable moment passes, in which the mind retains the image that the eye has seen, we must realise that this in itself constitutes an exercise in memory, however brief. Consequently, as despite a subservient effort we cannot be as automatic as the photographic camera, we might greatly enlarge our capacity both to see and to express if we cultivated our memory to retain, not only the essential and unchanging laws which govern the construction of the human figure, but all the momentary actions to which it is subjected; for the posed model is always action arrested, and the result of a slavish copy is always lifeless.

But further consideration of this subject may be postponed as I return to my earlier years. As time went on, with a constant preoccupation of my future work which quite separated me from the ordinary sports of childhood, my efforts grew more ambitious and the career of the sign painter seemed less attractive. Chance threw me into the company of a well-trained English painter, who was employed in the railway shops in a suburb of Albany in the interior decoration of the wagons of the company. In those days what were technically known as "headlinings" covered the ceilings of the railway wagons, and consisted of elaborate painted ornament often surrounding a panel of flowers or landscape, which was painted on canvas and then fixed in place. Painted panels often ornamented the spaces between the windows and the ceiling of the wagon as well.

My Saturdays, when released from

school, were generally passed at the railway works, and I never tired of watching the deft painter, as with facile brush, without model of any kind, he caused these squares of canvas to blossom with roses and dahlias, with morning-glories or peonies, or painted distant blue mountains reflected in tranquil lakes, and then dotted in white sails, with easy mastery. Equally interesting were the ornamental portions of the decoration; first drawn on large sheets of manila paper, then pierced along their outlines with a series of minute perforations which, when this pattern was placed upon the canvas, permitted the design to be transferred by "pouncing" or sifting charcoal dust through the perforations in the pattern. This done, portions were gilded, or painted and modelled with the same flowing brush. As my recollection serves me this genial craftsman was indeed expert, within certain limitations; in any case my gratitude is due his

memory for the patience with which he bore my presence and my endless questions. He likewise afforded an outlet for my growing ambition, for here was one clearly nearer the vague paradise of art, that like a mirage filled the horizon, than any sign painter. More seriously speaking, I question if it is not from my long watching at his side that the early interest in interior decoration, which has dominated my effort, first found birth. It is certain that many of his methods, in common with all decorative painters, I use to-day. My school-days, always more or less intermittent, seem to have finished shortly before I was fifteen, and about that time I encountered an artist of another calibre who was to have a most important influence on my work and life.

If you can imagine some little tranquil town in Italy sheltering, in the fifteenth century, some artist of first rank, some master who from choice preferred the

comparative isolation imposed by absence from the centre of the art of his time, and can then imagine a small boy, ignorant yet inquisitive, to whom the three magic letters A R T comprised all that he dreamed or wished to know, who lived in the same city; you can easily picture this minor incident of life in our historic old Dutch town of Albany.

This isolated artist was E. D. Palmer, a sculptor, who, dying in 1904 at the ripe age of eighty-seven, had survived the years of his artistic activity by so long a period that his service to our art is imperfectly understood as yet; though Mr. Lorado Taft, in his "History of American Sculpture," has endeavoured to make his position clear in the story of our earlier art.

But at the time of which I write his residence away from New York had little dimmed his success, and in the city of Albany, though there was not the slight-

est adequate comprehension of his talent, he was something more than a local celebrity. "There goes Palmer, the sculptor," would be whispered as he passed in the street, and in truth his handsome presence was one to be noticed in any environment. At least six feet in height, erect as he remained to the day of his death, with a great mass of beard, iron-gray, a distinguished profile, and an eye both keen and kindly, he would have been anywhere a marked man. More than once I had lingered in the side street, where he had erected spacious studios, and in the summer days when the doors might be open I had seen in the lower studio workmen carving blocks of marble into semblances of human shape. My timidity had never suffered me to approach and follow their work more closely, and if I was ignorant of the processes of painting, I was in utter darkness as to those of sculpture.

E. D. Palmer, from a photograph, 1868

Had I then known the story of Cimabue and the young Giotto; had I then read the anecdote of Gilbert Stuart, who, when a neophyte bringing a picture for his judgment hesitated at the threshold, called out heartily: "Bring it in; we don't keep painting out-of-doors here"; if, in a word, I had known the nobility which obliges an elder artist to welcome a younger aspirant, I might have sought the acquaintance of the master of these handsome studios; within which I knew were performed those mysteries of art which, from the time I could think, had baffled my crude understanding.

But my admission to the temple came about in the most commonplace way through the fortuitous encounter in my school with the young son of the sculptor, to-day the well-known landscape painter, Walter L. Palmer. The father welcomed the son's new friend, and within a very few months I was as familiar with

the interior of those studios as with my own home, and the boyish efforts of my new friend were not less guided, blamed, or praised by the sculptor than were my own. Such guidance as we received, however, my friend and I, followed no system like that which a modern art school would afford. We were left very much to our own direction. In a studio filled with casts of the sculptor's own works and from the antique, it never occurred to us, nor was it suggested, that by studying these we could form a basis for a knowledge of the structure of the human figure. This was undoubtedly for the reason that the elder Palmer was entirely self-taught.

In early manhood he was a carpenter in a remote inland town of western New York, when some rare travellers returning from Europe showed him a shell cameo. This kindled his ambition, and, procuring materials for the work, and with tools fashioned by himself, he set himself

the task of producing a cameo portrait. His undeveloped capacity was little short of genius, and by repeated effort he soon became something more than skilful, for there remain a long series of these miniature works, in which close veracity of portraiture is allied to a genuine sense of beauty. The minute scale on which he was obliged to work soon engendered trouble with his eyesight, and the transition to larger sculpture was thus imposed. Beginning with modest busts of a portrait character he was led on by his evident vocation to works of greater scope.

These were the days when such little sculpture as had been attempted by our compatriot artists consisted of weak imitations of the Dane Thorwaldsen, and Gibson, the English sculptor, who, established in Rome, limited their production to uninspired imitations of classic sculpture. Hiram Powers's "Greek Slave," upon its exhibition in New York, had ex-

cited an interest difficult to understand to-day, except as we realise the absolute dearth of any standard of sculpture existing in our then provincial country—nor in Europe, for that matter, save in France, where Rude and his followers were doing noble work. It is probable that had Palmer been subjected to the influences that Greenough, Crawford, and Powers had found in Europe, his work like theirs would have suffered the prevailing classical imitation, without acquiring more technical proficiency than theirs—for in this latter quality he was the equal of any American sculptor of his time.

But as it was he elected to remain at home, and our patriotic pride, instituting comparisons between the home-keeping sculptor and those who practised their art abroad, awarded him abundance of fame and opportunity. I remember later when I was a student in Paris, and when my early mentor came to Europe for the

first time, his expressed regret that early in life he had not known of the high quality of French sculpture and the opportunities for study there, but in the days of which I speak he was opposed to any form of definite training. "Study nature, and above all keep a tight grasp on your originality," would sum up the advice he gave. Now originality, or the personality of the artist, is undoubtedly the fine flower of his equipment; but the species of originality that will not stand training he is quite likely to find an encumbering weed in his future culture. There is, moreover, a moment in a child's artistic development when his fancy is latent, and he is quite content to copy to the best of his ability whatever may be set before him. It is in these years that an accurate eye, and a habit of establishing firmly the foundations of a work to be undertaken, can best be acquired; for then the means seem alone

important as the aim is imperfectly understood.

If these *post-facto* reflections can be justified, without yielding aught of the gratitude I shall ever feel for this early influence, in other ways I esteem this experience as most fortunate. Perhaps had my bent been for sculpture it would have been even more so, for the atmosphere of the studio was not unlike that of the workshops of earlier artists before the institution of art schools, with their definite system, calculated, as all such systems must be, rather for the average than the individual student. There was as I remember a constant discussion of the principles of art, much of which was beyond my comprehension; but, as it was all the result of the reflections of one who had evolved his theories from isolated and individual practice, in a country where accepted conventions did not prevail, they were racy of the soil; and prepared my

mind for the conditions I found existing not many years after in New York. In company with the sculptor's son our practice was constant, and soon we were absorbed in work from nature. My growing ambition had taken an upward step and was now centred on illustration, for I still did not dare hope that I could ever become a full-fledged painter. It must have been about this time therefore that I wrote to an artist, whose work had charmed me in one of the children's magazines. My special query, as nearly as I remember, was as to the process by which one produced an effect of moonlight. In reply this artist informed me, somewhat to my surprise, that he had no special recipe for this species of work; but if I would go out on a moonlight night and carefully observe the manner in which the light and shadow fell, the amount of detail of form that was obscured or visible, and the general effect

of the whole, and then endeavour to draw it from memory, returning again and again to verify my impression, I might in the end obtain my desire. Perhaps it was such advice that first sent me out-of-doors and, for other effects that could be studied by daylight, confirmed the habit.

Few painters I am certain have experienced more joy from working in the open air than I, and the habit was thus early formed. The placid landscape upon the Hudson, and in the country surrounding Albany, soon saw two youthful devotees assiduous at their task, who in boat or on foot left few corners unexplored; and few of its aspects, essayed in sketch or study, were left to blush unseen.

Meanwhile I had attained the mature age of fifteen. I must in some ways have been a most obnoxious youngster, for I was overcome with a sense of what I suppose I may call the primal curse of Eden, the law condemning us to labour for our bread. I

"Peace in Bondage," bas-relief, by E. D. Palmer, 1863

Now in possession of Albany Art and Historical Society

remember quite shocking a friend much older than myself, Mr. William T. Adams, who, under the pen-name of "Oliver Optic," had endeared himself to all my generation, by writing a series of children's books, which remain in my memory as the most enchanting works ever given a boy to read. He was the editor at the time of a children's magazine in Boston, and to him I wrote, gravely announcing that the time was at hand when in common decency I should begin to earn my living, and proffered some of my crude work for publication in the magazine. As he was acquainted with the circumstances of my parents, who, though not wealthy, were not only able but most willing to support me until I was of an age to work, he readily understood that I was merely morbid, and kindly, but most firmly, told me to bide my time.

It is true that at home my parents held out little hope to me that I could realise

my desire to become an artist. This was most gently denied me, partly for the reason that the career is one that has never appealed to parents in our country, where is still lacking the appreciation of art that makes an Old-World father weigh carefully the honours that may come to a successful artist in the balance with the very evident insecurities of the career; and, more often than not, find the former more alluring than the dangers of failure. But more potent than this was their belief which I shared to some extent, despite all the promptings of desire, that the career was one that demanded years of preparation, of study devoid of any remuneration of a material sort, long residence in Europe, and, in the end, a more than doubtful career in a country which they held was still in process of formation, and only capable of according the artist scant honour and a precarious material existence.

I will not linger over what there may be of truth even now in this last contention, but as events soon proved this magic garden of Art may be entered at humbler gates than by the main entrance; and, once within, there is quite enough to keep one charmed—yes, and busy. It might be better, certainly, were all young aspirants so fortunately situated as to avoid in their earlier efforts those employments of art where the standard is set so low that their taste may be vitiated or their end too easily attained; but art in its first flowering in Italy accepted the law of usefulness, and to-day we are proud to treasure in our museums the objects of household utility of that time; adorned perhaps by the painting of Botticelli or given form by the sculpture of Cellini.

For the next two years I remember living in what it is not quite fair to call an armed neutrality with my parents. In truth they were arrayed against the ful-

filment of what I knew in my secret heart was to be, but for the most part they left me free to my constant occupation, and probably did what many wise parents do in the presence of an absorbing vocation, and simply temporised. I of course knew that if my dream was to be fulfilled it must be by my unaided effort, and I made many trials to prove that my embryonic art could be self-supporting. New York was but a few hours distant from my city. Going thither armed with a portfolio filled with what I was pleased to consider drawings, I made the rounds, not only of all the illustrated publications of the time, but every wood-engraver, most of whose work was then of the most mechanical description, was honoured by my visits and the proffer of my services. As I was in spite of all my tenacity of purpose an extremely timid youth, these visits, or rather the reception I met, almost uniformly tried my soul to the utmost.

At home in my native city I scored some small, very small, successes. For my friend, who painted "head-linings" for the railway wagons, I drew a ferocious Knight Templar on horseback for some society banner which he had been commissioned to do; which elicited a tribute from one of my elder brothers to the effect that as I had earned five dollars by one day's work it was a pity that I could not do it more often. I also profited, presumably by the illicit millions William M. Tweed and his following abstracted from the treasury of the city of New York, to the amount of fifteen dollars by the sale of a water-colour that I had ventured to show in the window of the local art store, where it attracted the attention of and was purchased by the Hon. Mike Norton, one of Tweed's lieutenants.

But it was not until a few months before I was seventeen that anything really decisive occurred. Among the wood-en-

gravers in New York at whose doors I had knocked was one who had not repulsed me. This exceptional person, Mr. John Filmer by name, was then engaged in engraving a series of large designs from drawings by different artists for the New York *Independent*, which at that time was issued as a sheet corresponding in size to a daily newspaper, and once a month contained a front-page illustration. On one of my visits to him, Mr. Filmer had good-naturedly said that, if I would prepare an attractive design, he would go with me to submit it to the editor of the *Independent*. So I returned to Albany and bent all my energies to a drawing representing a number of boys coasting by moonlight, material for which was abundant in our hilly city that enjoys nearly six months of winter. Ah, me! How many nights I have half frozen my toes studying my effect of moonlight. For the figures I pressed some of my

"Coasting by Moonlight," early drawing by Will H. Low, 1870

young comrades into service, and made innumerable sketches of myself, in appropriate positions, reflected in a large mirror in my room at home, which had often served this purpose.

At last the drawing, finished as well as I could do it, was carried to New York and, in company with my sympathetic engraver, an eventful interview was had with the editor of the *Independent*. With more or less doubt, inspired by my extremely youthful aspect, it was agreed that if I could reproduce my original drawing on boxwood ready for the engraver's burin it would be accepted. In those days all drawings for illustration were drawn on the prepared surface of boxwood, a surface that, even in after years and with much practice, I always found rebellious. To make, therefore, for the first time a drawing that was destined to be the largest illustration that I ever undertook, which demanded no little tech-

nical skill to spread a tint of India ink upon the prepared surface, was no easy task. I fancy that I must have repeated that drawing at least a half-dozen times from start to finish before I at length arrived at a result which I dared to submit to my editor. Fortunately it was found acceptable, and no multi-millionaire will ever feel the satisfaction in cutting off coupons that was mine when I was paid fifty dollars for my work, to say nothing of the thrill of approaching glory, inasmuch as it was considered worthy of publication.

It was this small event, however, that had a determining influence on my career. It was decided at home that I was to be allowed to study in New York for a year, when there came a sudden, though fortunately temporary, crisis in the family fortunes, which made it necessary that I should begin to earn my living at once. An opportunity offered immediately through

a friend of my father's, who was willing to take me into his large printing and publishing house, and, if I showed capacity, to advance me rapidly. It was a generous offer, and as my parents knew how surely it assured my future, it must have been a trial when I begged for a few weeks' delay in which I proposed to go to New York and try my fortune, with what remained to me of the sum received for my first accepted drawing. I had treated myself generously to an assortment of artists' materials with my first earnings, but I still possessed a capital of twenty-seven dollars. With that I set out for New York, and, with some additions to this amount, I have remained there ever since—with occasional absences in Europe.

Here I must pause in these personal recollections, though I wish to tell later what fortune befell me in our Eastern metropolis. Having ventured to enumer-

ate so many trivial incidents of my childhood, I find that I may have given an impression that it was the financial future of the artist which chiefly preoccupied me. Necessity knew that law undoubtedly, and I could parallel my story by those of many of my compatriot friends whose youth knew similar conditions; but in all these cases it was the life and the work of the artist of which we dreamed, and I know of none who for a moment imagined that wealth, or even more than the most modest competency, was to be found along that road. As young Americans, we simply obeyed our unwritten law that sends a youth, often ill-prepared, out into the world to do a man's work, at an age when, in Europe, he at the most has chosen a career, and set himself down for a long preparation to fit himself to practise it. The National School of Fine Arts in Paris—the École des Beaux-Arts—limits its chief prize to men who have

not attained the age of thirty. Up to that time a young Frenchman can consider himself, and is considered by others, as preparing for his life-work; and I have known many a man of forty to be currently spoken of as a *garçon d'avenir*—a promising youth.

To enforce this contrast of conditions in the Old World and the New I propose to tell the life story of a peasant youth who attained fame in that pleasant land of France, where the art tradition is firmly welded into the national life. In this I have no intention of drawing a disparaging contrast. We are of our time, and of our country, and the American artist has the world before him. There are conditions here by which we profit largely, and as I have already said we adopt those of other lands that we find serviceable and make them our own. But for our young art, and above all for our young artists, there is profit to be

found in the consideration of the youth, the education, and the work of Paul Baudry.

II

THE EDUCATION OF THE ARTIST

It was Laurence Sterne who first put into words the sentiment, which by over-quotation has now become trite, that some things are "ordered better in France" than elsewhere. This is certainly true of all matters æsthetic. In the accumulation and conservation of wealth, in the encouragement of industries and commerce, in the preservation and cultivation of the natural resources of its soil, and in the advancement of science, France keeps pace with the highest modern demands of civilisation. At the same time and as an integral part of its social system, art and letters are given a more honourable place than in any other

country of the world. In this enlightened land the spiritual efficiency of man counts for as much as his material power, and side by side with its great industrial, financial, and scientific interests the productions of its architects, painters, sculptors, musicians, poets, dramatists, and authors are fostered and protected. To some degree this is an affair of the government of the country, especially in all the initial educational processes; which are, however, carried beyond the limits of the schools, and by a system of rewards, definitely known as "prizes of encouragement," the earlier efforts of the artist and author are helped forward.

But even more important than this systematised governmental encouragement is the resulting public spirit of France, which recognises the work of its artists, musicians, and authors as an asset to the national wealth, esteems their career as among the most useful and honourable

pursuits of man, and by material and honorific recognition makes place for them in the national life.

The crass ignorance of the scope and aim of the artist, which may be found here the moment one steps outside of a very limited circle, is found nowhere in France. In the country, among the peasantry, ignorant though they may be of any special manifestation of art, the images of their churches, a chance visit to the nearest town and its almost universal museum, or an innate deference for any work of man which they see seriously pursued, have prepared them to accept the artist and his work with respect, if without comprehension. The fairly hostile attitude of the ignorant in English-speaking countries, which so frequently greets the artist, seems founded on a belief that his work is hardly worthy as the life-effort of a grown man; and when, on learning that his trivial productions are sufficiently

esteemed in certain circles to be purchased and preserved, their wonder translates itself into the query, "Where do you find fools to buy them?" This may possibly be an aftermath of the Reformation, which in these countries drove art from the churches and from the life of the humble; but here and now, as we mount the social scale, we find that, as Mr. Kenyon Cox, in a public address, once put it, "The majority of Americans still feel that they can be 'fairly comfortable' without art."

Not so in France, where a child of humblest source will find even among his remote parentage or from his fellow-villagers encouragement and support, if his vocation be marked for any of the liberal professions, and from every round of the social ladder hands will be extended to help him upward.

He was a fortunate youth, therefore, who first saw the light of day on the 27th of

November, 1828, in the little town of La Roche-sur-Yon, and was given the name of Paul Baudry. At the time of his birth there was little to foretell the brilliant future to which he was destined, but there is much in the story of his earlier years to mark the contrast between the conditions which, even now, confront the ugly ducklings of our art as they grow their plumes on their swanward way, and the manner in which such an evolution is "ordered" in France.

Baudry's father was a maker of wooden shoes, the *sabots* of the countryside in France, and in the pursuit of his industry he had led a wandering life. In the company of other children he had first watched the flocks of his native village until it was time for him to learn a trade, when he was literally sent into the woods as apprentice to a *sabotier*. There like a gypsy he had lived until in turn, his trade acquired, he took his way over the coun-

try roads, camping in the vicinity of each village, plying his craft in the shelter of the trees until the locality was furnished with its supply of wooden shoes, when he would take his simple work-bench and seek a new field of industry. As Monsieur Eugène Guillaume, Director of the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts, said many years after, in an appreciative notice of Paul Baudry's work, the father thus "passed his life in the woods, rising with the dawn, influenced by the passing hours and the changing weather, in closest touch with the infinite mysteries of nature, and having, as chief distraction from his toil, his violin which he played at night under the stars."

Surely an existence like this was in some sense a preparation for the advent into the world, as one of the twelve children of this pastoral father, of a son who was an artist from his birth. The nomadic life of the elder Baudry had ceased upon his

Paul Baudry

From a photograph

marriage, when he established himself at La Roche-sur-Yon, a small town of about ten thousand inhabitants, but the *wanderlust* of his earlier years persisted. This desire was gratified by the habit of long excursions through the surrounding country, and from among his numerous children it was little Paul who was his chosen companion. Armed with fishing tackle as their ostensible excuse, these recreant anglers were above all devoted to seeking out picturesque sites, and to his latest years the painter retained the impress of the sensations then experienced, and avowed that from his father he had received his first sense of the beauties of nature. In the public school of the town meanwhile the little Paul was winning such modest success as the character of the school permitted, while much of his leisure at home was given to the study of the violin in obedience to the desire of his father, who wished him to become a

musician. Only in obedience, however, for another form of art engrossed his childish mind. He had found for this taste a most effective ally in the person of a local artist named Antoine Sartoris, who served as the drawing-master in the school which Paul attended. Sartoris was originally a plasterer by trade, but having by economy put aside enough to keep him in Paris for a couple of years, he had bravely abandoned the trowel, and entered the atelier of Picot to study painting. His ambition was greater than his talent, and of all his art effort the memory of the service he rendered Baudry alone survives. This was always kept in mind by his grateful pupil, who, to the end of his life, when all the honours that France can bestow on an artist were his, never failed to inscribe himself as "pupil of Sartoris," in the Salon catalogues, along with the more resounding titles of Member of the Institute, and Commander of the Legion

of Honour, which custom demanded. When he was thirteen his father renounced the cherished wish to make a musician of his son, and acceding to Paul's desire placed him in the studio of Sartoris. "It is *your* trade I wish to learn," was his announcement to his good friend, in unconscious imitation of Correggio's cry: "I, too, am a painter."

Under Sartoris's direction Baudry remained three years, receiving such instruction as the modest painter could give him, until the master realised that this brilliant pupil had grown beyond his capacity to teach him further. It is well to bear in mind the small resources of a little provincial town such as was La Roche-sur-Yon, yet there were found among its inhabitants those who followed with interest the progress of this little lad and who, when there arrived a decisive moment in his career, stood ready to aid him in its further evolution.

Public sentiment and the constitution of our laws forbid with us the expenditure of public funds for the benefit of the individual, but there was no such barrier to prevent Sartoris from addressing the following letter to the Mayor of La Roche-sur-Yon, in August, 1844:

"Among the pupils of my school there is one Paul Baudry, aged fifteen, born in this city, who has been under my direction for the past three years, and has greatly distinguished himself. He is a youth of decided talent, and the progress which he has made now demands that his future art education should be confided to masters of greater distinction than mine. The parents of the lad are not in a position to extend him aid, but, as there is no doubt of his fortunate disposition leading him to a high place in art, his talent demands that his future progress should be assured; for it is our duty to develop the arts by every possible means. I there-

fore solicit that you, as mayor of this city, should explain this situation to your municipal council, and if you will add the influence you possess, the council may be disposed to grant a sum, small but sufficient to send this youth to Paris to become the pupil of one of our great painters. The municipal council will undoubtedly seize with alacrity the opportunity to encourage art in the person of this child issued from the cradle of our city, and destined to be one of its glories hereafter, and it is with confidence that I venture to signalise this great opportunity to the mayor and the municipal council of La Roche-sur-Yon."

Did not our laws forbid, a petition of this nature would I fear appeal more to our American sense of humour than to any other sentiment, if it were addressed to the municipal authorities of any one of our cities, little or great, but it was effective with the governing powers of La Roche-sur-Yon, who from its meagre budget

promptly voted the "small but sufficient" sum that enabled Baudry to begin his studies in Paris. Sartoris's appeal was indeed typical of many like demands which in different localities in France have been granted, enabling the recipients of municipal encouragement to profit by the further advantages of their country's system of education.

Here I am tempted to resume for a moment my own personal experiences and to tell how I, at one period of my studies, received from my master, Carolus-Duran, a letter somewhat similar to that just cited; and like that, in the intention of my master, designed to be presented to the municipal authorities of my native town. It was at a time in Paris when I had apparently exhausted every resource of a private nature, and was obliged to announce to my master my impending departure and consequent withdrawal from his influence.

Not the least of the gratitude I owe him

is for the kind words he found to express his regret at my projected departure. "But," he urged, "surely your city should do something for you, since you have shown considerable progress and have already exhibited in the Salon." I tried in vain to explain that our cities took no such parental view of their children as did those of France. "I am sure," he insisted, "that if I wrote a letter, explaining how important it is that you should remain in France for another year or two, it would bring some result." And consequently he wrote a letter which, if less prophetic in tone than that of the early master of Baudry, contains nevertheless such proof of a generous intention that I look at its pages, yellowed by time, even to-day, with a grateful heart. It seems hardly necessary to say that it was never submitted to the common council of Albany, but it is pleasant to record, since a kind action deserves reward, that it was

influential in a private direction in prolonging my studies in Paris.

Supported by the grant from his native city, Baudry went to Paris and entered the atelier of Drolling, a painter of repute at the time. The general interest he had excited prompted the prefect of the Department of La Vendée, in which La Roche-sur-Yon is situated, to supplement his meagre allowance from public funds at his disposal, though the entire amount was only sufficient to support him by the strictest economy.

Filled with devotion to his art, the necessary hardships of a student's life weighed upon Baudry but little, and in his letters to his parents find slight mention. It is not necessary to transcribe his various school successes during the next six years, but in the competition for the Prix de Rome, the highest reward obtainable there, he succeeded in 1850. During these years his city and his de-

partment had stood by him, and if only considered from a financial point of view, this investment in a future reflected glory was far from a financial loss; since afterward by gifts to the local museum of works from his brush Baudry more than repaid the sums advanced.

What can measure, who can count, the moral return of the assistance lent to a gifted son of this little town? In his too short life, for Paul Baudry died before he was sixty, his upward career was followed by the succeeding generations of the place of his nativity, as successively he won the Prix de Rome in 1850, was awarded a first-class medal at the Salon in 1851, was given the cross of Chevalier of the Legion of Honour in 1861, and in 1869 that of officer, honours which were followed in 1870 by his election as Member of the Institute. In 1875 came his final promotion to the rank of Commander of the Legion of Honour, and in 1881 the

reward of which he was the most proud: the unanimous vote of his fellow-artists, who that year for the first time awarded the great Medal of Honour of the Salon to the painter of the superb decoration for the Palace of Justice—the "Glorification of Law." Throughout this period one after another of his numerous works had met with success.

He could easily have amassed a great fortune, as the favoured portraitist of the brilliant epoch of the Second Empire, and in fact from his choice among the commissions offered him there remain a series of masterly portraits. But his love for pure beauty was too great, his fancy too fecund, to restrain his effort to portraiture alone, and there resulted from these gifts a number of charming pictures. One of these, "The Pearl and the Wave," has certainly never been excelled as a vision of the pure beauty of the nude since the days of Titian, while almost

"The Glorification of the Law": Ceiling decoration by Paul Baudry in the Cour de Cassation, Paris

equally notable are the "Infant St. John," "The Toilet of Venus," or "Diana Repulsing Love." These, mere titles of apparently trite subjects as they appear here, are in reality works replete with a new and informing sense of beauty, translated by technical methods which from first to last show an unceasing progression, keeping pace with the advance with which painting has been enriched since Baudry's earlier time through the efforts of the so-called Impressionists.

The high ideal which Baudry cherished controlled his action when, in 1865, he accepted the commission for the decoration of the foyer of the new Opera then being built in Paris. He was at the height of his success, in favour at the court, and the recipient of all that art-loving Paris could shower upon him, when this, the most important decorative work of modern times, was proposed to him. Its acceptance imposed relinquishing the life of

Paris and renouncing all its material advantages, but already a year in advance of the official commission, he had learned from his friend and former companion in Rome, Charles Garnier, the architect of the Opera, that the task was reserved for him, and he had set about to prepare himself for it. Closing his studio in Paris he had returned to Rome, became once more an inmate of the Académie de France, in the Villa Medici, as in his student days, and began full-sized copies of several of the panels of Michelangelo's ceiling in the Sistine Chapel, in order fully to penetrate the secrets of the master-decorator of the Renaissance.

It demands a nature of heroic mould thus to renounce the pomps and vanities of contemporary success, to consecrate every effort to a long and painstaking preparation, to be followed by the equally conscientious execution of so great a work. Ten long years, almost without

diversion into other fields of production, did Baudry give to this task, refusing meanwhile commissions without number and working for the glory of his country—and little else. Little else indeed, for we find him in a letter to a friend whimsically computing that his work was paid at the rate of forty-two francs fifty centimes —about eight dollars—the square foot. The whole decoration, comprising three enormous ceilings and twenty-four panels of varying shapes and sizes, covering in all over three thousand five hundred square feet, was paid only twenty-eight thousand dollars—a sum which Baudry could easily have earned in any one of the ten years that he gave to this work.

The history of art, so full of incidents of works accomplished at the price of great sacrifices, hardly shows a more notable instance of a task undertaken as a public duty than this effort of Baudry. Easily master of his craft to a point where what-

ever he would have been willing to give would have been accepted by his public and crowned with approbation, he approached his task, not with timidity, but with a single-hearted determination to add to his equipment of acquired knowledge all that the most searching study of great preceding works would yield. In addition to the eleven full-sized copies of the Sistine Chapel frescos, painted in Rome, he passed the evenings of an entire winter (1867–68) in laboriously tracing upon canvases of a reduced size the cartoons of Raphael now in the South Kensington Museum, and the following summer found him in London, working ten or twelve hours a day copying upon these prepared canvases every detail of these famous works. Every corner of Europe that could show him decorative work was also visited, and the drawings from life, repeated studies in the research of action that models failed to give, the

composition sketches, and the adaptation of these to form a harmonious whole, constitute in themselves a mass of work that would almost suffice for a life of endeavour.

During the progress of the work the war of 1870–71 alone drew him away from his task, when shouldering a musket as a private soldier he did his part in the heroic defence of Paris, passing nights in the trenches, suffering from cold and hunger; but sustained by the thought that there, no less than upon the scaffolding before his great canvases, he was doing his duty for his country.

At last in 1874 his task was finished, and before being put in place the great panels were exhibited for two months at the École des Beaux-Arts. It was truly a national event and, thanks to the devotion of one of her children, France had added a noble work to her many treasures of art. No student who was present in

France at that time, as I had the good fortune to be, could fail to take the lesson to his heart that, beyond the superb accomplishment of a noble work—noble in conception and noble in execution—there was the further sentiment of *noblesse oblige*, which radiated from this great achievement of one who at every step of his career had been sustained and encouraged by his people, and who now repaid the debt a thousand-fold.

"You speak most kindly of me, my dear critic," wrote Baudry to Emile Bergerat, who had sent him a studied eulogium of his work, "but do you know those of your many kind words which have given me the most pleasure? Those that expressed the thought you have had to speak of me as a Frenchman, and to award to our beloved country what little glory I might pretend to, if not as an artist, at least as her devoted and loving child. My love for France is the best

part of my religion, and for your thought of joining my name to hers I thank you most sincerely." And in this moment, when virtually his whole country applauded the happy termination of his effort, Baudry's thoughts went back to the little town in La Vendée which had stood by him in his youth. The entrance fees to the exhibition at the Beaux-Arts were divided among various art societies of a charitable nature, but Baudry demanded and obtained that a portion—rather larger than the amount that the city had given him—be awarded to the poor of La Roche-sur-Yon.

Ten years of productive life were alone to remain to Baudry, for the physical hardships entailed by his great task had told upon him. They were ten fruitful years, marked by the growth of a nature which up to that time had shown a faithful allegiance to the precepts of the long line of great painters whom Baudry had

so faithfully studied. Now in full possession of his powers, nature made a stronger appeal, and though his fidelity to the past had not proven a hindrance to his interpretation of the present, and though not only in his portraits but also in his pictures and decorative works his types had been of his time, he now developed a new and fresher sense of light and colour. As with many other painters in progress, he here left some of his contemporaries in a quandary, they hardly recognising the work which his new vision impelled him to create as equal to his earlier effort. Jules Breton, one of his earliest friends and a great admirer of his work, regrets the years that Baudry consecrated to the Opera, as robbing contemporary painting of the many charming pictures that he might have produced during that time, and deplores that the habits then formed gave to Baudry the freer brush, the larger style of the decorator, and lost for him

the more suave qualities of his former manner.

It was but another instance of Baudry's courage and devotion and, had longer life been accorded him, we should have seen a master possessed of all that scientific research and departure from accepted conventions of colour have given to the modern painter, allied to the sense of style, the accurate knowledge of form, and the comprehensive grasp of decorative line and composition that were already his.

It is interesting to follow in Baudry's work this evolution as manifested in the repetition of one of his favourite compositions, that of "Diana Repulsing Love." One might fancy that the master had taken this theme as a test of his successive theories of colour, for in the exhibition held in 1886 at the École des Beaux-Arts, in which, shortly after his death, were shown all that were obtainable of his

portraits and easel pictures, there were three or four replicas of this subject, varying little in composition and form, but greatly in effect of light and colour. In the earliest, painted in 1864, the indignant goddess, with arm upraised ready to chastise a most mischievous Cupid, is of a fine amber tint, her lithe figure everywhere relieved by a dark background of woods; a composition in effect of colour visibly inspired by Titian and the Venetian masters. In successive repetitions, in 1877 and '79, Diana emerges in tones more nacreous, and the density of the background permits a ray of light to penetrate here and there. But Baudry's final effort, where even in form the figure of the Huntress is more slight and finer in action, is everywhere permeated by the light of day. The air circulates around Diana, Cupid visibly soars athwart the foliage which rustles in the breeze, and there are no figures more living and breathing,

Photo by Braun, Clement & Co.

"Diana Repulsing Love," by Paul Baudry, 1882

in an atmosphere more livable and breathable, than in this last rendition of a favourite subject, which bears the date of 1882.

It was in the full flush of progression in the art to which he had consecrated a noble and useful endeavour that Paul Baudry was taken on January 17, 1886, and his place in modern art is not yet fully recognised. Misled by his constant allegiance to the schools, not only to those of his country to which he owed so much, but, in another sense, those of the great galaxy of masters by whose precepts he profited, too many critics consider him only as a result of academical training. On the other hand, since the academical powers of his country delighted to honour him, he is often referred to as possessing merely "official" talent.

But there was never a moment in his career when he was not alive to the world about him; and his art, cast voluntarily

in the mould of the great preceding masters, he was able to rejuvenate and revivify by his intimate sense of the beauty which his eyes sought and found in the types of contemporary life. Ardent student of Raphael, like that master he painted from "a certain beautiful lady who lived in his memory," but the memory was of a living type and not that of an ideal built up from other works of art. In his portraits one could easily follow not only the changing fashions of art, which caused him to paint M. Guizot in 1860 with all the severity of an Ingres, but the changing types of humanity that evolve during a generation. Thus his portrait of Madame Bernstein and her son in 1883 is a human document denoting the presence in France at that period of a luxuriant Israelitic type, depicted with a knowledge of painting that allowed his brush to fairly incise the Byzantine ornament of the chair on which the lady sits,

Mme. Bernstein and her son, Robert, by Paul Baudry

and then to flow with easy competence over the rich stuffs of her costume, while the whole is dominated by the life and expression of the heads of the mother and child. If greater portraits than these, and others of Baudry's production, have been painted in the nineteenth century I know them not.

Great as was the effort, notable as is the success of the great decorations of the new Opera, the intention, the style of individual figures, and certain of the panels which are vastly superior to the others, do not suffice to prevent the whole achievement from taking a secondary place in Baudry's work, in comparison with other of his later decorations. It is doubtful if any painter, even Paul Veronese, who so successfully vanquishes the overpowering mouldings in which his work is set in the Ducal Palace in Venice, could have overcome the unfortunate scale and weight of the gilded mould-

ing which Garnier saw fit to provide for Baudry's panels in the ceiling of the foyer of the new Opera.

In any case it is the memory of his work, as seen before it was fixed in place, that abides with me. In its definite setting the decoration appears confused in parts, and lacking in the definition of its pattern as a whole; which is perhaps the first and most essential quality of a mural painting.

This may be due in a measure to the height at which the works are seen, and even more to the shape and weight of their framing, but it was Baudry's task to overcome these conditions and in this he has partly failed. The only other painter to whom Baudry can be at all compared in our time is Puvis de Chavannes, and he, though not possessed of a tithe of Baudry's virtuosity, has never failed in this important quality of making his pattern clear.

It is evident, however, that Baudry perceived his error, for in other and later works no one has surpassed him as a decorator.

Fortunately there remain some half-dozen works, notably the great "Glorification of the Law," which, possessing all the merits of beautiful design, presentation of types of austere dignity, exquisite feminine charm, and graceful artlessness of childhood, as well as vibrating colour, will serve to show to all time that, from the tiny panel portraits where he emulates Clouet, up to these great works in direct lineage from Veronese, Paul Baudry was of the race of great artists.

I have been led far afield in the consideration of Baudry's later life and work, and have said too little of the man or rather of the youth; for it is from his earlier years that we can draw profitable reflection for our present purposes.

We have seen that from the first he set

his purpose high, but it may well be a matter of conjecture how it was possible for a little peasant boy, who hardly received the rudiments of what we consider education, to arrive even in his extreme youth at so clear a perception of the nobler aims of art. It is also cause for wonder how he was able to express himself so intelligently and with such choice of language as even his earliest letters show. Before he was thirteen he was working in the studio of Sartoris, and presumably engrossed in an absorbing study, which offers to the neophyte so many and various technical difficulties that time for or thought of general education must be put aside.

Not long ago, in the Fellowship existing in the schools of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, there was proposed for debate the following question: "Should artists receive a liberal education outside of their art?" I have not learned the

result of this debate, and do not consequently know the solution of this problem as determined by it. But it is evident that every element which can enter into an artist's life and broaden his understanding is an influence for good, and that his work will profit thereby.

It is equally evident, however, that the acquirement of a thorough training is a matter of years, and that its primary requirements can best be attained when the student is extremely young, docile under direction, and unaware of the delights of production; which, as soon as the imagination awakes, prompt him to build however insecure may be the foundation.

"Catch your artist young" might well be an axiom for our art schools; though there are notable examples of eminent artists who have been exceptions to this rule. Paul Dubois, the great French sculptor, whose "Jeanne d'Arc" and a long series of masterly works have placed

him in the first rank of modern art, and whose position was officially confirmed by service for many years as Director of the École des Beaux-Arts, was twenty-six years old when he abandoned the profession of civil engineer, for which he had been educated, to follow art. Jean François Millet had attained the age of twenty-one before Paris afforded him his first serious opportunity for study. To come nearer home and to take an example from an American artist, who here and abroad has won his place as a master, John La Farge had graduated from college and passed his majority, before a visit to Paris had awakened the dormant vocation that has had such a notable influence upon the art of this country.

Upon the other hand I remember as though it were yesterday the advent of John Sargent into the little studio world which we knew in Paris in 1874—those of us who were enlisted as the pupils

of Carolus-Duran. I can see the slim youth of seventeen, his arms entwined around a formidable roll of studies which, when disclosed to the eyes of the master, caused him to exclaim, "You have studied much," and then, with the caution which made "not too bad" the highest praise lavished on a student's work, he added, "Much that you have learned you must forget."

This remarkable package contained a little of everything which a youth of pronounced artistic talent, encouraged by every influence that could be brought to bear upon his budding genius, could produce before the second decade of his life was completed—a life begun and continued under the stimulating forces of Italy—the birth land of painting to our modern view. I can remember how we crowded around our new comrade that was to be, as one by one he showed the master drawings innumerable, drawings

from life, from the antique, and careful studies of Swiss scenery that, in their knowledge of the handling of the lead-pencil, recalled the lithographed work of Calame. There were paintings from the nude, portrait studies, and copies in oil, water-colour studies after Tintoretto, Titian, and Carpaccio, brilliant sketches in the same medium of scenes and figures in Venice, Florence, and Rome. It might have been said of him, as it was said of Alfred de Musset at thirty, "He had a splendid past behind him," and Sargent was barely seventeen.

His subsequent career in the Atelier Duran was one of successive triumphs, which have since continued, as we all know.

Of course we are here dealing with a phenomenal nature, which, so far as contemporary judgment can determine, has infrequently been surpassed in the whole long history of our craft; but some part

of Sargent's early attainment of a position second to none in the field of modern art is undoubtedly due to the fact that at an age when the majority of students are taking their first uncertain steps along the thorny path of technical achievement, he was able to walk firmly, conscious that he was equipped for the march. It may be simply a further indication of an exceptional temperament to record that this Admirable Crichton of our arts had found time, even at this early age and in his absorption of the primary requirements of his chosen vocation, to become fluent in four languages, Italian, German, French, and English, to be a fairly accomplished musician, and to have acquired a general knowledge of literature; in a word, to be much further advanced in his general education than most youths of his age. The capacity of acquiring a fund of information that fits a man to take his place in general

society is in no wise dependent upon a scholastic training, fortunately, although an education thus gleaned, in the moments when a growing intelligence is centred upon some one absorbing vocation, may leave curious lapses—lapses calculated to make the pedagogue weep.

Listen, for instance, to this confession of the mature age of Jean François Millet, as confided to his biographer Alfred Sensier:

"I never was able to follow the ordinary methods of instruction. In the little school where my infancy was passed, what I wrote from dictation was thought to be better expressed than the exercises of my school-fellows. This was probably for the reason that I had a passion for reading everything that fell in my way, and well-turned phrases and certain words became fixed in my sight, rather than in my mind, and I reproduced them instinctively. Never have I followed set

rules, never did I learn a lesson by heart. Left largely to myself, most of my time was passed with my copybooks tracing ornamental letters or drawing pictures. I never was able to get beyond addition in arithmetic; even to-day subtraction is a mystery to me and the higher mathematics totally unknown. I am still forced to make all calculations by my reasoning powers, intuitively, in a manner which I can hardly explain."

Yet this untutored peasant was a master of his language; certain pages of his in French rival those on which another great uncultured man, the American, Abraham Lincoln, inscribed his thoughts in immortal English. Each for that matter had gone to the same source for the inspiration of their written style, to the Bible.

In truth the little peasant boy, who had taught himself to read, had been led by the influence of the parish priest to

study Latin, and it was in this language that the two books with which he was the most familiar, the Bible and Virgil, were habitually read by him through life. We find in his letters a constant use of this language, not serving a pedantic purpose, but quoted naturally as one uses a living tongue.

Despite the lacks noted above it would be absurd to call a man like this ill-educated; although, between the labour in the fields of his earlier day and the preoccupation with the problems of his art in later years, place had never been found for the ordinary scholastic course.

The study and production of the artist's profession, especially as understood in Europe, constitutes in itself a liberal education, and he is a dullard indeed who arrives at a respectable proficiency in art without having gleaned by the way a fairly good education.

This alone explains how Paul Baudry

was able in the most cultured circles of supercultured Paris to meet men upon an equal footing. Millet, living in isolation in the country, with abundant time to read and willingly limiting his interests to his painting, his garden, and a few of the classic authors, was never called upon to make and hold a place in the volatile world of Paris—a world where the keenest perception of intellectual values is necessary in the parry and thrust, the assault and defence by which one wins, and keeps, rank within the charmed circle of "Tout Paris."

Baudry was endowed with a retentive memory and, like many others possessed of the artistic, imaginative temperament, he was an omnivorous reader. The official programme of the schools to which he adhered so closely in his earlier years called, moreover, for many subsidiary studies besides the actual work in the ateliers. A tolerable knowledge of history,

a general acquaintance with forms of art kindred to painting, with mythology and with classic literature, are all sooner or later called for from the student who enters the various competitions established by the national system of art education. There is, moreover, in all the intellectual activities of the French a tradition of thoroughness, which imposes upon even the least gifted of its sons who proposes to enter the lists of the liberal professions a duty of accurate and complete preparation for the task. In the case of so brilliant a mind and so retentive a memory as Baudry's, there must have been many side issues and subsidiary facts which he made his own in the pursuit of the allotted themes laid down in the programmes of these various competitions. As in his Paris days in the Atelier Drolling, so was he alert during the four years that he studied in the Villa Medici after winning the Prix de Rome.

In this latter stage of his education he was especially fortunate, for the Eternal City then saw many pilgrims of high intellectual worth, and, as his letters show, Baudry profited by his privileges as *pensionnaire* of France to frequent their society and cull from each some profit.

He was keenly conscious of the high place to which he might aspire, and in one of his letters home written during this first sojourn in Rome he recalls the rainy night when he first left his parents' house bound for Paris. With a sympathetic glance backward to his ambitions at the age of thirteen, he tells his father how he stopped for a moment before the statue of some local celebrity and, striking his youthful breast with Gallic enthusiasm, vowed to return some day to la Roche-sur-Yon "a man grown, possessing talent, loving his kind and serving them." And again: "My life appears to me like a

drama: The curtain rises upon a rustic cabin, the fire blazes in the chimney and the spiders have woven their webs athwart the rafters; then the scene changes, and is replaced by this palace in Rome. This is the second act, the third remains to be seen; it is the good Lord who directs the theatre and none may know what the end of the play may be. In any case the actor or, to drop allegory, your son, will live contented under any conditions, if only he be permitted to paint good pictures—and to make you happy."

It may be said that I have chosen my examples of men who, devoted to their art, have achieved their general education along the way, from among those of exceptional talent and exceptional intelligence.

But it is our evident duty at the outset of life to "hitch our wagon to a star," and the examples I have chosen show that no help, save that which we can find

within ourselves, will guide us along the starry ways of high achievement. The task is more difficult as yet on our side of the water, for centuries of tradition have certainly "ordered" fuller opportunities for the spiritual life of the artist in the Old World. But on the other hand, we have the opportunity of creating a new, and possibly better, tradition here at home. Our material opportunities are many times greater than in Europe. There every way is blocked, every prize has hundreds of hands extended to grasp it, and the whole struggle for life is fiercer and more tragic than anything that we as yet know here.

Our most serious obstacle is the lack of a high standard, not alone in the execution of our work but in its definite aim. In our habit of beginning where others leave off we too often accept a result, without thought or inquiry of the means that have brought it about, and our al-

leged progression is too often superficial imitation.

There is no royal road to good art, we must painfully and honestly follow the road that others have trod and, as we cannot possibly know what dangers there are ahead, nor whither the road ends, it is well at least to know where it began; so that if we find ourselves straying from the path we may at least retrace our steps and begin our march anew. Above all we must set out with courage, for it is no holiday excursion: "In art we must be prepared to leave our skin upon the thorns which beset our path," has said Millet, and I cannot better conclude than with a final citation from this courageous and gifted master, which is as applicable to the aim which we should cherish here at home as it was to that of the Old World when painting there was at its best. "You are of the few who believe (so much the worse for the others) that every art is a

language and that a language has been given us to express our thoughts. Say it and repeat it, it may make converts and, if more people realised it, we should see fewer painters and authors whose works say nothing. Technical achievement is alone supposed to be clever, and those who practise their art in this manner receive all the plaudits of the day.

"But in good faith and if the hand be really clever should it not be employed to express something worth while—and then hide its cleverness behind the work accomplished?"

III

THE PROBLEM OF SELF-SUPPORT

THERE is no graver question that confronts the earlier years of the artist than the effort to become self-supporting, for it is axiomatic that like the rest of mankind the artist must first demonstrate that he will not become a charge upon society before he has the right to think of art for art's sake. His earlier years in the school may be free from this care. If, like Baudry, he is of a land that shows a parental interest in his vocation, he may put off the day when his art must earn his bread for a longer period than is usual with us; and, even in our country, if the student's family be blessed with both

fortune and patience, giving him the means to prosecute his studies and not demanding immediate results, he may dream the dream of art for art's sake for a comparatively long period. But sooner or later the day comes when the portals of the school are closed behind him, and he, outside among men, doing the work of men, must "make good."

In many ways, and certainly in all his highest aspirations, the artist is closely akin to the poet. Quite as certainly a youth who should propose to earn his living by writing poetry would find that the current newspaper jokes concerning verse as an article of commerce were based upon a solid stratum of fact. There have been a few mortals who, after managing to subsist by other means until they had created a demand for their poetic wares, have coined gold from the twanging of their lyres, as Homer, we are told, was supported by a grateful

public while chanting his Iliad from door to door; but customs have changed since then, and to-day the higher forms of poetry, and to some extent those of art, are gratuitous offerings laid upon the altar of the Muses.

Consequently the artist who says to himself: "Go to, I will now produce a work which shall exist for itself, which will show the world not only how proficient I am in my art, but will fill a long-felt want in satisfying that hunger for beauty, sweetness, and light that has existed for ages," and who then produces an unrelated, isolated picture or statue, will find himself nine hundred and ninety-nine times in a thousand baffled in his endeavour. Yet the world is full of uses for the artist, and may even, if he be the thousandth man, accept him in his highest endeavour, and at once. But such cases are so rare that we should be manifestly ill inspired if we based the practice of

our ancient craft upon such a slender foundation. He is not the less noble therefore if he bends his art to the beauty of use, retaining meanwhile all his high aspirations and making of each work a progressive step toward a freer and fuller expression of these higher ideals.

The artist is in fact more fortunate than the poet, inasmuch as his method of expression is by the work of his hands and constitutes a craft for which the world finds many uses. We have indeed numerous examples in our art of men graduating from the humblest occupations, where the artists' knowledge has found commercial demand, to the higher walks of their profession, where their production is esteemed at its full value. I know of two of our prominent artists of to-day who for years supported themselves by retouching photographs. Meanwhile their painting, kept apart and produced with-

out thought of gain, gradually won its way, until now they are able to give all their effort to the demonstration of their best ability. Those who make of illustration a stepping-stone in their career are legion and for good illustrations there is always a commercial demand.

The young painters and sculptors who find in the studios of older men employment as assistants in works of sculpture or of mural painting are fortunate, for their bread-winning gives them a post-graduate education in a workshop where the problems of practice are solved daily. This resembles the apprenticeship which Raphael served with Perugino, or Van Dyck in the studio of Rubens; though it is to be noted that modern conditions favour the student of to-day more than his prototype of earlier time. In the studios of olden time the apprentice served not only without remuneration, but he paid a premium to the master as

well; whereas to-day these conditions are reversed. Work for lithographers, designing and painting stained glass, designing book covers, wall paper, carpets, or tissues, are all open to students of art; and a State capitol comes to mind, whose carved lintels kept a young artist busy with mallet and chisel during the summer months, and paid the way for the four winters in which he studied in an art school. The fashion of pictorial advertisement gives employment to hundreds of young artists throughout our country, and the almost universal use of illustration in our daily press has opened a by-path of art to thousands of others. Then where, forty years ago, in all our broad land, there were scarcely any art schools excepting those of the National Academy of Design in New York, and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia, now there is hardly a city lacking its art school and corps of

instructors, while in many a village a young artist could earn a living by teaching the principles of his art.

Many of these employments, I may be told, serve to deaden the ambition or vitiate the technical methods of the men who are forced to have recourse to them even for a time, while the service of many of those who remain in them becomes mere drudgery, affording little of the joy of production; which is rightly held to be the greatest recompense of the artist's life. To this first objection I would answer that, outside of those who were born to fortune, I know few American artists who have not tarried for longer or shorter periods in some one of these or kindred employments. In the measure that they have been gifted, their time of probation has been long or short. The best of them have kept inviolate their higher aspirations, and have preserved their technical integrity; largely by doing the work that

their hand has found to do to the best of their ability. On the other hand, among those whose talent found either its limit or its just application in any of these employments and who have remained therein, there are many who have lifted the standard of art applied to commerce to a very high level. I am not certain but that many of us look at the advertising pages of our magazines with quite as keen artistic enjoyment as that which we experience when we visit the average exhibition of art.

In all forms of art there are but two classes, those of works well or ill done, and in all its manifestations there is for the producer the joy of doing the work, and for the product there exists, somewhere in the world, appreciation of its true value. It is the joy of doing the work that counts with the artist, far beyond any other reward he may receive; and in this he differs from the majority

of mankind who find in their labour little joy.

It was this at least that gave courage to the youth that I have continued to know best, in those early years in New York, when, ill-prepared for the struggle, he began to earn his living by art.

There were hard times a-plenty in store for me, none possibly quite so hard as their anticipation occasionally menaced, but there never was a moment when I did not realise that, lacking my vocation, I might have been keeping books; and I turned with sustained contentment to the meagre resources of my craft. This was in the winter of 1870–71, and then there existed few of the many employments to which a young artist could to-day shape his effort. The illustrated periodicals all had their staff of artists, working in the publishing offices, evolving their designs without use of models—professional models, indeed, were hardly to be found

in the metropolis at that time. One or two of these illustrated papers, *Harper's Weekly* notably, occasionally accepted a drawing from some one outside of their regular employ, but more often they purchased what was known as an "idea"; otherwise a sketch, which was then turned over to one of their regular "staff" to be redrawn to serve in their publication. Illustrations for books were given to a few men of long-established reputation, and were of course very much less numerous than to-day. There remained a few drawings, chiefly of a mechanical nature, that were in slight demand on the part of wood-engravers, to serve for advertising purposes. This short list comprised the field of opportunity which I and a few of my contemporaries found spread before us.

Conditions like these necessitated considerable agility of both body and mind, a quality which to-day we should describe

as "hustling," though the term was not invented then, to secure a share of this scant harvest of opportunity. I marvel now how I and some of my comrades of the time—half a dozen of whom have survived the experience, as I have —managed to live.

Personally I remember among the early work which I found to do, a drawing of some form of a dumping car, the sketch for which was made in an unheated cellar somewhere in lower Broadway, with the thermometer at a lower degree than my benumbed hands enjoyed. I wonder now how this little drawing on wood, made without knowledge of the use of the mechanical draughtsman's instruments, could possibly have been of use to the credulous engraver who accepted and paid for it. Other early works were a number of theatrical posters, which were then rudely engraved on large slabs of pine wood a yard or more square. These

blocks were, for the larger posters, printed separately and the sheets then joined together.

One masterpiece of this description advertised the glories of Barnum's circus. This poster, where I only collaborated with an artist older than myself who was expert in drawing horses, must have covered a space fifteen feet long when spread upon the walls, and was printed in colours, so that we had a large number of the blocks to design, and I fancy that my decorative bent may have been found useful chiefly in the ornaments of the chariots and in the lettering. Another and quite independent work was for that classic melodrama, the "Streets of New York," and represented as nearly as I can remember the City Hall burning to the ground, surrounded by the old-fashioned fire engines, with firemen galore. Really youth rushes in where angels fear to tread, for I not only accepted the com-

mission to do this intricate subject, but without tremor I invented the whole composition and—surely for the reason that the standard of poster art was not unduly high—it was found satisfactory.

Meanwhile my brain was continually exercised to find subjects for works of better grade. I may say that I lived, ate, drank, and even slept with the continual preoccupation of inventing something, seeing something, or hearing of something that could be translated into an acceptable drawing for some of the illustrated papers. This was, as I have said, in the winter of '70–71, the year of the Franco-Prussian war. The newspapers were filled with stories of the heroic defence of Paris, and the privations which its inhabitants were suffering from want of food. Crossing City Hall Park one morning early, a lean cat ran across the walk in front of me, and a subject, "The Last Cat in Paris," instantly flashed into my mind.

"The Last Cat in Paris," drawing by Sol Eytinge from sketch by Will H. Low, 1871

More audacity of youth! I had never seen Paris of course, and its skyline, the form and placing of its buildings, were totally unknown to me, but I set to work, and concocted in some way the view of a city seen from its house tops by moonlight. Upon a chimney top, silhouetted against the full moon, stood a scrawny cat at bay, while from every nook and cranny of the surrounding roofs stole gaunt figures armed with guns, intent upon securing for their larder "The Last Cat in Paris."

It amuses me to-day to consider this childish performance as a mark of predestination for the periods of my life that I have spent in Paris. In any case it marked the first of the benefits that I have derived from that good city, for it was at once accepted and published by a now forgotten journal called "Hearth and Home." It was noticed at the time, and the paternal Mr. Charles Parsons, who at that time presided as art editor

of the Harper publications, gently chided me for not giving him the opportunity to use it. He had already neglected so many like opportunities, that my youthful legs had grown weary from climbing the narrow iron stairway, which in dizzy, spiral form, mounted from the courtyard of the Franklin Square building to the floor on which the art department was situated—and the aforesaid legs had become even more feeble and limp from descending these stairs with drawings which had not been "found available."

One of my friends of those days—who now, from a position which his quaint and fertile fancy has made essentially unique, must look back upon his youthful experiences with much the same feeling as I do, pardoning our affronts, smiling at our expedients, and marvelling at our escape—was wont to lay down the law governing acceptance by the Harper publications:

"I go up," said he, "present my drawing, and am promptly shown the door. I return, and this time they send the office boy to show me the way down the stairs The third time they throw me down the slippery, corkscrew stairway, and then station a husky porter at the foot ready to prevent my going up when I present myself the fourth time. Finally I get a ladder and climb in the front window. The art editor faints, but when he comes to I am still there, so he buys the sketch and lets some other fellow make the drawing."

This may be a somewhat exaggerated picture of the début of a young artist in those days, but it contains more than a grain of truthful counsel even for the present generation in its relations with our periodicals. "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

By some such process I, at least, one fine day bore away triumphantly from

the Harper office a square slab of boxwood and the definite order to make a drawing on it for the front page of *Harper's Weekly*. Months had passed meanwhile and my original capital of twenty-seven dollars had received some small additions and I had lived by my own exertions, how, and how poorly some of the time, I forget and remember, for more clearly in my memory is fixed the joy of each hour of my chosen work and the hope of its continuance.

This first drawing for *Harper's Weekly* gave me countenance in my little circle, for I had made friends living much the same life and sharing the same hope. One of these friends enjoyed the proud position of a permanent place on the staff of *Harper's*, and, Royal Academician to-day, busy with the series of decorations for the capitol of his native State, after having enriched the Boston Public Library with the frieze of the "Holy

Grail," he may have a reminiscent smile as he recalls his term of imprisonment in his first employ. Edwin Abbey I had known for some years before I met him again in these early days in New York. Mere children, busy with much the same activities, he in Philadelphia and I in Albany, we had made acquaintance through the good offices of my early friend "Oliver Optic"—both of us being devotees of his literature and of the children's magazine which he edited.

Much correspondence between Abbey and myself ensued, until, tiring of long-distance communication, I invited him to make me a visit at my parents' home in Albany. This accepted, a return visit to Philadelphia on my part was in order, so that when I next met him in New York, though neither of us was out of his teens, we were already "old friends."

When I spoke of imprisonment a moment ago, my memory retraced the

picture of the cellular construction of the room in which Abbey, in company with Charles Stanley Reinhart and one or two others, worked in the old Harper building. Partitions, not unlike those seen in English chop-houses, had been erected at right angles from the windows, each cell enclosing a desk and a chair. I can see my friend in those early days seated at his desk, a pile of English illustrated papers, *Punch*, the *London Illustrated News*, or the *Cornhill* magazine, towering on either hand above his head. Hither were brought manuscripts of the most varied character, and from them these unfortunates were obliged to select subjects. Then from memory or imagination, culling at times essential facts from the store of periodicals on their desks, they made their drawings.

We did not however consider them unfortunate in those days; on the contrary we looked up to their capacity to produce

work that was constantly found "available" for publication, as to a higher form of art. Reinhart, indeed, had been abroad, a proud title at that time, and had studied for a year or so in Munich; and even Abbey had enjoyed some months of study in the Philadelphia Academy.

Upon the other hand, those of us who were lodged, two or three together, in lofts, which possessing a skylight were known as studios; who could occasionally prevail upon a friend to pose for a drawing in progress, or who, even more professional, sometimes secured the services of one "Henrietta," who then enjoyed the distinction of being the only professional model in New York, we, free lances, had certain advantages that our friends of steady employment and the unfailing salary envelope on Saturday nights, rather envied us.

This picture of early art life in New York may excite the pity of the well-

trained art student of to-day, and there is no doubt but that it was filled with pitfalls for the future, for the untrained youths who practised their immature art under the grinding necessity of earning their bread. But like "the sweet little cherub who sits up aloft" for the benefit of "poor Jack," the goddess of art whom they worshipped has dealt kindly with some of them.

Of Edwin Abbey, I need hardly speak. Out from the unpromising ground of this early toil, only a few years after blossomed the fair flowers of the series of drawings for Herrick's poems, and these, securing him the liberty to live where he pleased, took Abbey to England. There, if his schooling was not pursued according to the regular academical courses, the frequentation of the strongest painters residing in England has stood him in such good stead that he has in turn become a master. There is, in truth, no regular as

there is no royal road to art, and given such exceptional ability as that of Abbey, no early deviation from the beaten track of art education can lead the artist seriously astray, nor prove an insurmountable obstacle in his progressive path. Charles Stanley Reinhart also broke away from these conditions, and under the genial influence of artistic environment in Paris, produced notable work, showing little or no lack of the deprivation of academical training during a career ended too soon by his early death.

A number of us however, whose days were devoted to illustration as a breadwinner, put to profit the evenings by studying in the night class of the National Academy of Design; in that school which in its continuous service since 1826 has been of such vast benefit to succeeding generations of American artists. I can better speak in praise of the Academy school, since I was destined not to profit

by it at the time of which I speak. With a view to entering there I had passed some time before leaving Albany in making, under the direction of Mr. E. D. Palmer, a careful drawing from a full-length plaster cast. As Mr. Palmer had an eye of almost unerring correctness I fancy that this drawing, which he made me perfect far beyond anything that I had done up to that time, was not without merit. It was drawn with lead-pencil, that being the instrument with which I was most skilful. This drawing was submitted for entrance as a pupil of the Academy to the School Committee of the time, but was returned to me, with the astonishing message that, while its merits as a drawing were quite sufficient for my admission, it could not be considered, as the rules demanded that it should be executed in charcoal or crayon.

This struck me then, as indeed it does now, as being a decision that had no con-

nection with my ability to draw, and consequently I scorned to make a second application for admission, but joined a club largely composed of German lithographers, who conducted a small life school in a more or less desultory manner in one of the club rooms, where I made my first undirected effort at drawing from the nude.

This trivial anecdote gains point perhaps from the fact that the whirligig of time permitted me to play the part of instructor in the schools of the Academy for three years, later on, and until recently, for more than twice that number of years, I have served as chairman of the school committee of the same institution —which leads me to express the hope that none of the decisions of this latter time were quite so illogical as the one just related.

For that matter it would undoubtedly have been better for me had I pocketed

my pride, even at the expense of my logic, and made the endeavour to show that in everything, except the superficial skill of the medium demanded, I could draw sufficiently well for admission to the school, by submitting a second drawing, executed in charcoal or crayon. Had I succeeded in entering there, I should have found myself in the company of Carroll Beckwith, F. S. Church, Charles Melville Dewey, C. Y. Turner, Alden Weir, and others of my contemporaries then and now, some whom I knew outside the school and others whom I was to meet in Paris later on.

Outside of this small circle of the very young, whose preoccupation with the question of self-support might be thought to have precluded a larger view of art, there was in New York at that time a well-defined interest in art which included a greater share of the general public than to-day, which was actively promoted by

the most influential of the citizens of our then provincial metropolis, and from which the recognised artists of standing then practising profited to a proportionately greater degree than their later brothers in art have as yet known. To this charmed inner circle we younger men had little access, but living on its outskirts we could know much that passed therein, and form our opinions of the more active participants in the higher artistic life of New York—opinions which we were not chary in expressing.

New York was then distinctly provincial, but like many provincial places grown to sudden importance, it was also self-sufficing, certain of its judgments, and patriotic to a point which jealously encouraged every home product that could add justification to its nascent pretension to become the metropolis of the Western World. The Civil War, while impoverishing certain sections of our

country, had brought wealth to many in New York; and some proportion of this, large in comparison with the numbers benefited, was spent in the encouragement of our native art. New York was the only one of our cities at that time where any considerable number of artists lived, and from long before the war the foundation and growth of the National Academy of Design, and its consequent school of American art, formed chiefly from its members, had been a matter of fostering pride to the local civic interest which then existed; however absent it may be in the Greater New York we know to-day.

The building at 51 West Tenth Street, that had been erected about 1857 for the special accommodation of our local artists, was still the stronghold of the flourishing Hudson River School, which we rather decry to-day, though the fluctuations of the picture market may well

bring its productions into favour again—the vagaries of the picture market, however, being a question quite outside of art need not be considered here. The decline of this early American school was already imminent at the time of which I write, but there remained enough of its prestige to make of the Saturday afternoon receptions, held in the Studio Building, one of the chief social events of the town. Long lines of carriages, which had brought visitors to the studios, stretched the length of the street, and were lined up some distance upon the adjacent Fifth Avenue. Within the building a great throng of people elbowed each other, pressing around the easels where were to be seen the latest works of the painters who occupied these studios. Charming gentlemen they were too, accustomed to the best society that New York possessed, travelled and cultured; many of them having brought back from

long residence abroad manners of Old-World courtesy, which our old-fashioned New York appreciated and to some extent shared.

I remember years afterward, when some of us young iconoclasts of the Society of American Artists had overcome the fault of youth sufficiently to become members of the National Academy of Design, that the late Parke Godwin was present at a dinner given in the galleries of the Academy at the opening of the annual exhibition. Mr. Godwin made a most delightful speech, filled with reminiscences of the earlier days of the Academy, and of his old friends who were then young. He spoke of Cole, Morse, Kensett, Church, Gifford, and McEntee; he turned to Daniel Huntington, who was present, as was Worthington Whittredge, whose death we were called to mourn so recently, and included them all in a retrospective survey of their lives and aspira-

tions. Then he stopped for an appreciable moment, shook his leonine mane of silvered hair, and almost fiercely concluded his speech:

"I am told that some of you younger men that I see about me paint better than these old friends of mine of whom I have spoken. Perhaps this is so, I do not know enough about painting, about present-day painting, to know; but there is one thing of which I am certain: you may be better painters, you cannot be better men than these gallant gentlemen who were the artists of my day." The applause which greeted him as he sat down carries a lesson which we all may heed; for if the art school is justifiably occupied with its special technical training, the harder school of life places the scholar only in the grade for which his mental and moral accomplishments fit him.

But those were brave days in the old Tenth Street Studio Building as we youth-

ful aspirants were permitted to mingle with the throng, to note their respectful attitude toward art, and the deference paid to its practitioners. Kindly men also were these painters, and many a word of encouragement and advice was to be had from them as we youngsters were made welcome. Then again in the hard struggle for life that some of us knew, whispers of the prices paid for their pictures, fabulous as they seemed, served to give us hope that some day we might hope to share in the golden flood. No doubt in many cases the money, which had come easily to the purchasers of these works, was not wisely expended. In the hard times that were soon to come, in the changing fashion which importation of foreign works of art was to create, many of these pictures when brought to the auction block failed to maintain their original prices. There had been a grain of folly in the patriotic desire to encourage our native artists.

Not long ago one of our older artists told me of an incident that occurred in these days. One of our painters, a man now quite forgotten and at the time not one whose work ranked high, had received a commission to paint a picture for some one who was more generous than discriminating. When the painting was finished, the would-be patron of art found it to his liking, but on inquiring for the first time its price, he was surprised to learn that the painter demanded ten thousand dollars. To his mild expostulation that he had hardly expected to pay so much for a work which in dimensions was not important, the artist stood firm. The man of business, realising that, as no price had been agreed upon, he was in some measure bound to accede to the excessive demand, finally proposed that the question be left to the arbitration of three artists, common friends of theirs. This was agreed; but on meeting for the pur-

pose of settling this delicate question, the painter of the picture in dispute was able to compare the prices paid for so many works by other men, of whom he was at least socially the equal, living in the same studio building and sharing their life, that the arbitrators were at last forced to decide that seven thousand five hundred dollars must be paid, "for a picture," said my informant, "which to-day would not be worth more than three or four hundred dollars."

About this time also was produced Albert Bierstadt's great canvas, the "Rocky Mountains," and we were told that the painter received twenty-five thousand dollars for his recompense. To-day, this picture has found a permanent place in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. It is the present pleasure of our public and many of our painters to decry the work of Bierstadt. But to stand before this picture and note its accurate draw-

"The Rocky Mountains," by Albert Bierstadt, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

ing, the various knowledge of form that it displays, the manner in which the whole vast panorama is kept together, and the happy disposition of the various objects scattered through its foreground, one who knows something of the difficulties in making of a large canvas a harmonious and sustained composition, would be ill-inspired to deny the ability which has accomplished this work.

Fashion in art is a curious thing. Long years ago a painter so gifted as Sir Joshua Reynolds was prompted on his tour through Italy to note the works of the Caracci and the Bolognese School and to determine that they were nearly of the rank of his demigods of painting, Raphael and Michelangelo. In his "Discourses" on his return to England he wrote pages in their praise, which we may read to-day. Yet in these pages we shall not find the names of Perugino, Botticelli, Pinturicchio, or Ghirlandajo; painters whose art

we delight to honour to-day and whose works blossomed on the walls of Italy when this great artist and earnest student of painting lingered over the now discredited art of the Eclectic School. Who shall say that when our present landscape school settles down to the realisation that earth has its anatomy, that a tree has its definite character of form, that the "planes that lie flat, and those which are vertical" are the two great qualities of a landscape, as Jean François Millet once told to my proper ears—who shall say that when our landscape painters *draw* as Rousseau, Corot, and Millet drew, as Harpignies draws to-day, but that our painters of an earlier time, men who at least loved the shapes of things, as did Durand, Kensett, Church, and Bierstadt, may enjoy a recrudescence of esteem for their notable —if somewhat topographical—work?

But with the curiosity and with some of the independence of youth, it was not

alone to the studios of the more popular and most lauded painters of the time that I bent my steps; in the same building were three or four studios where I found works which appealed to me as having other and greater qualities than I found elsewhere.

It must be remembered what a very ignorant young pilgrim of art I was in those days, how little I had seen and how very much less I could know with such certainty as experience since then may have endowed me. Therefore I take little credit to myself for my early predilection for the works of John La Farge, Winslow Homer, and Homer Martin, three of the men whose work appeared to me to carry a new message of art. At the most it could only have been a groping, intuitive sense of what these men then saw clearly, and it was only the glimmer of a light to which further study was to open my eyes, but which for the work of

these men has never flickered or grown faint since those days. Another whose work had excited my youthful enthusiasm was George Inness, whom at that time I did not meet.

Twelve years later I was privileged to pass a few months in a pleasant house on the Hudson where Inness was of the company, and even then, in 1883, he was still far from the recognition which he finally attained and which has grown in volume since his death.

In these earlier days he was a much-disputed artist, the chief bone of contention being, as I remember, his tendency to paint extremely low-toned landscape. Those who disputed the relative merits of light or dark painting took little account of the disposition of the erratic painter, who later in life abandoned his earlier theories, and painted each subject in the tone which suited the mood of the moment or was dictated by the character of the

theme. But at that time Inness was said to paint upon a canvas grounded with Indian red. Nicolas Poussin two hundred years before had made the same mistake, with the result that many of his works to-day are almost indistinguishable, and some of Inness's pictures of the period of which I speak are in the same plight. The strong, darkly coloured ground has eaten its way to the surface, and the factitious "tone" that anticipated the kindly hand of time, which is best left to do its own work in its own way, has destroyed many of his earlier works.

The wordy war which we waged upon this or kindred and trivial technical subjects best paints the restricted and provincial attitude not only of the younger artists of the time, but of many of our elders who were equally parochial in their views. A number of years before there had been a temporary popularity accorded to the works of the Düsseldorf painters,

which were almost the first foreign pictures brought to our country. This had menaced the prosperity of our native school, and there had grown up in consequence a prejudice against any form of foreign art. Some of us were ill-received therefore when rare examples of Rousseau and Corot began to attract our attention, and our elder mentors solemnly warned us against losing our native originality by contamination with foreign influences. "Corot," snorted one of these, a now forgotten painter, "Corot! Give me a canvas, some cigar ashes, and a dirty rag, and I will paint you the best Corot you ever saw."

Nevertheless the great French painter impressed me by an atmospheric quality, a grace of line and mass, and a sense of style which I did not always find in our native productions. Here I was fortunate in having Homer Martin to serve as a court of appeal, to justify my timid admi-

ration for Corot's art. Martin I had known from my earlier years in Albany, as he frequently passed through on his way to or from the Adirondacks, where he often passed his summers. I ran across him early in my sojourn in New York at a French restaurant. I remember the somewhat grudging manner in which he complied with my request to be allowed to sit at his table, a manner which thawed perceptibly under my enthusiasm and eager questioning, so that on quitting me he graciously allowed in so many words that I was not perhaps as much of a fool as some of the influences to which I confessed might have made me. I saw much of him thereafter and through him I came to know some of the few men who were in sympathy with his aims, all of which was a precious influence to one like me sailing without rudder or compass, though my course was already set to attain, by what means I knew not, to

the larger opportunities of art—to the fair land of France.

In all I passed two years in New York, working only in black and white, save one poor little picture painted in a scant fortnight, impelled half by emulation of a friend who was preparing a picture for exhibition at the spring Academy. It has come back to me, through the death of my mother, and curiously enough there are bits of drapery in it that I could not paint much better to-day; and though, as a whole, it denotes the inexperience of the painter, it was accepted and hung in the Academy Exhibition of 1872.

I managed to maintain a precarious footing in the ranks of illustration for these two years of my novitiate, and, to continue the consideration of the financial aspect of art, in the second of these years I earned about fifteen hundred dollars. It was more than a youth of nineteen would have been likely to earn in any commer-

cial employ, and meanwhile, erratic and insufficient as were the influences to which I was subjected, I was learning each day that the life of the artist afforded opportunities for mental growth in every direction; I was learning that in the joy of the work was the recompense thereof, and, above all, I was learning how very little I knew.

In this spirit I was fortunate when I made a new friend in Olin L. Warner, the sculptor, whose death by accident in 1896 cut short the career of one who counted in our art. Warner had just returned from several years' study in Paris, and eagerly I listened to all that he had to tell. He had been the intimate of a group of young sculptors, who a year later received me on terms which showed their appreciation of their former comrade, by whose introduction I was permitted, in some sort, to take his place.

One of Warner's admonitions was of

great value to me when my turn came to go to Paris. He advised me to adopt the Spartan attitude of fleeing the society of my compatriots while abroad; to profit, not only by the means of art education, which France puts as generously at the disposition of aliens as of her proper children, but to learn the underlying principles which have made the country so great in art; endeavouring to acquire as much as possible the French point of view, to know not only the men of to-day but the whole long line of artists who since the time of Francis the First have laboured to that end. He gave me the first clear insight into a larger comprehension of the place that art has taken in the past, which is sustained more than elsewhere in the world in France to-day, and of the possibilities of the future, which perhaps we are called to inherit in large part.

His enthusiasm was contagious, and to one occupied with the not too elevating

production of popular drawings, evolved from a desire to please a popular periodical, most salutary. Under his influence my ambitions grew, and then came a windfall, and I found that I could go to Paris.

IV

EXPERIENCES IN THE OLD WORLD

To wake up in Paris, as the realisation of a dream that has lasted for years, is a sensation destined to make enduring impression. I was not yet twenty; I was quite alone; I did not speak a word of French; I enjoyed the same lack of a sense of locality that still enables me to lose myself promptly in any strange city; —but I was in Paris and the world was before me.

Chance had taken me to a hotel near the Madeleine, and I went down the Rue Royale, on the brilliant Sunday morning following the night of my arrival, and came out upon the Place de la Concorde. Stretching away in the distance was a

long avenue, which by the monumental arch at its summit I recognised as that of the Champs Elysées. This I followed for some little distance, when I observed a long line of people, whose steps seemed bent to enter a large building on the left of the avenue. Why I should have fallen in and followed with this procession is a question that still puzzles me, but follow it I did. I passed under a great portal, and suddenly found myself in what it took me some little time to understand was the annual exhibition of art—the Paris Salon.

It was in the old Palace of Industry, which was built for the French Universal Exposition of 1855 and vanished before that of 1900, to be replaced by the present building; one vastly more ornate and considerably less adapted for the purposes of an exhibition of art. It was a free day, and not a little of the wonder that overcame me was to see the vast throng of visitors intent and apparently interested

in art. They gathered around the more popular works exhibited and, with an abundance of gesture, which then struck me strangely, approved or criticised with animation in a language which then appeared to me even stranger still. Lost in the vast throng, I wandered from room to room or lingered in the garden below, under the great roof of glass, where was gathered more statuary than I could have believed to exist in the world. Forgetful of food, I stayed there the livelong day, and came out near nightfall, my brain fairly whirling with what I had seen. Perhaps it is for that reason that my recollection of any special work, seen that day for the first time, remains confused and blended in a maze of colour and form.

The one artist whose work I had not known before, who began that day to excite an admiration that has grown with my years, was Puvis de Chavannes. It

was not that I could at once appreciate the essentially decorative character of his work; on the contrary it rather troubled me, but with a strange fascination that led me to seek to know more of an artist who at that time had hardly acquired recognition in his own country. I realise now that my intuitive feeling for decoration was the reason for which, in the following months as Paris became more familiar to me, I was led to frequent the gallery of Durand-Ruel, in the rue Lafitte, where works of his could occasionally be seen, together with those of many men, Millet among the number, who then also lacked the world-wide renown that they have since attained.

The young American who goes to Paris to study art to-day finds his way made easy. Too easy in a sense, for the great number of his compatriots who are gathered there make of his translation to a different land, a different language, and a

different standard of art, a mere change of scene and a prolongation of almost the same influences that he has known at home. He will find a students' club composed of his compatriots, who consort to schools where the majority of the pupils are Americans. He will find it easy to live in this environment, and pass a longer or shorter period without really coming into contact with the people of the country, without acquiring their language, and, what is vastly more important, without realising that it is not the France of to-day alone for which he has journeyed so far.

The France of to-day shares with the world what it has taken centuries of effort in art to establish. To take only its last offering; to accept its last Salon success, which like all contemporary movements may be only a passing phase, and to endeavour to establish on this basis one's future effort, is to embark

upon an uncharted sea, with only a day's provisions on board. Among modern French painters, for instance, Besnard ranks with the first. His art is audacious; it seeks the unknown; it plays easily with different technical qualities; to-day it is an effort in one direction, to-morrow in another; but it is always alluring and it never fails to elicit attention in the Salon. But how few of the younger men who look for his work each year, with an unconscious desire to imitate it the next, when perhaps the erratic master is producing something quite different, realise that Besnard is the pupil of the rather discredited Bouguereau! Time was when Besnard's work could hardly be distinguished from that of his master, who, however much the changing fashion may have temporarily discredited his art, remains one of the most accomplished draughtsmen and thorough technicians of the French school. It was the solid foun-

dation that Besnard acquired under the direction of Bouguereau, who in turn had inherited in an ascending line the same thorough technical education, that enables him to-day to juggle with his various experiments, to be audacious, to be fairly disquieting; but never to lose his footing on the solid rock of technical proficiency, based upon the underlying strata of remote geological periods of French art endeavour.

It was only a few years ago that a like universal acceptance of one phase of Whistler's work steeped much of the effort of our younger men in a cheerless and monotonous gloom. I have seen a class of students in a life school working from a model whose glowing flesh was relieved from a dark background in tones that it would baffle their pigments to equal in brilliancy. But when I turned to the studies, I saw a murky array of sadly faded damsels, who appeared to be

sitting disconsolate in cellars from which nearly every ray of light had been excluded. On my demanding the reason for this obvious departure from the self-evident truth—which daylight, the palpitating quality of flesh, and the sombre background established—I was told that as the model was placed some distance from the window it followed naturally that the flesh must be lower in tone than it would be if nearer the source of light, and that it was necessary to take this into account, as otherwise there would be no reserve force on the palette, if the painter was called upon to depict a figure nearer the window. This method of crossing a bridge before arriving at it was, I was informed, that which Whistler advocated in his latest teaching. If such was the case, I am inclined to think that the master, who as we know was endowed with a rare sense of humour, had evolved this theory when

given up to the gentle art of making a new generation see that white was black.

Examples like this could be multiplied, and I do not for a moment wish to claim that my generation was a whit wiser than that which has followed, as we, sheep-like, were led by the shepherds most in vogue in our time. But the youths who went to Paris thirty years ago were far less advanced in their training than those who go thither to-day. We were not prepared by long study in art schools, such as now exist here, to begin at so advanced a point our transplanted endeavour as do the students of the present time. Consequently as a rule we were obliged to stay much longer, and to begin very much as the young Frenchman began, in the lower grades of the art school. Then there had been no such influx of our compatriot students in the schools of Paris as there is to-day; and working side by side with our French

comrades, we unconsciously imbibed from the same source as they a greater respect for tradition, a deeper insight into the remote causes which little by little, effort following effort, have woven the canvas upon which French art has painted its accomplishments, in undying colours, for the past four centuries.

Again—and here I speak under correction, knowing how prone maturity is to extol the past at the expense of the present—I doubt if for purposes of instruction Paris is as well equipped to-day as it was thirty years ago. The men then at the head of the schools were thoroughly academic. Their names alone recall to us a generation of painters whose personal production was perhaps devoid of any special or above all novel quality, but who were versed in the principles that have kept art logical and sane from the first. Accuracy of form and construction, veracity of colour and values, insistence upon qualities of

style, and adherence to established traditions are all landmarks that the youthful mariner finds of service when leaving port. Once out at sea, if he carries enough ballast, he may steer his course alone; but, as a pilot for clearing the harbour, he could in my time choose between Gérôme, Cabanel, Boulanger, Bouguereau, Lefebvre, or Bonnat; experienced mariners all. If he were inclined to freight a venture that dared to sail a less established course, he could enlist Carolus Duran as his pilot. Now there has been a wave of discontent in Paris; in art it would seem as though the French have become revolutionary in the exact ratio that they have become conservative in politics. They have maintained a republic since 1870, but in art they have had many revolutions since that time.

Consequently, if we look to-day at the current art instruction of Paris we find it addicted to the worship of new gods,

some of quite recent invention and untried potency, and the student who seeks benefit there may hear but half-hearted advocacy of these long-accepted principles of art from men who themselves are groping in the research of new qualities; that may in the end prevail and constitute a definite advance, but which are for the moment elusive and uncertain. I know for instance, of a young French friend, the pupil of an artist, who is a rare survival from these earlier influences. The master was keeping the pupil hard at work drawing, when one day the pupil went to visit the studio of one who had received and welcomed these newer tenets of the last word, the up-to-date methods of art. "You tell me you are drawing," cried this scandalised *moderniste*. "Pray, why do you do that? Don't you know we draw no longer."

But in my time we drew—or at least

we drew as well as we were able—and the maxim of Ingres that "drawing is the probity of art" was served to us as our daily fare. Conditions here have changed, it is true, quite as much as in Paris, if indeed the superficial aspects of art education there have not been directly affected by the numerical strength, the imitative skill, and the desire for immediate results of the typical American student. We go there now knowing exactly what we want, foreseeing the use we can make of it, having but little time in which to acquire it, and less patience with what we deem the roundabout and dilatory methods which still prevail in some of the government schools—the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, for instance.

Paris has every form of art for sale, as well as that which the government bestows gratuitously upon all who are worthy, of every nationality. Therefore the youth with fixed ideas and what I

may call ready-for-use standards can find in Paris the exact form of instruction that he desires, in schools which are established upon a business basis, in which the pupil for a fixed and moderate sum may receive the counsels of perhaps the artist most in vogue for the moment; the one man, his compatriots of longer residence in Paris may assure him, who surely possesses the secret of modern art; who, if he has not disclosed it to a waiting world at the last Salon, will surely do so at the next, or the next after—if some other fellow does not get ahead of him.

It was in a much more submissive spirit that the American art student went to France thirty years ago. We knew very much less technically than our men who go there now, and we were too few to dictate the terms on which we would accept the benefits we sought. We were told that art is long and we believed it—as many of us have indeed

found it to be, as the student of to-day will discover it to be in time, and as certain cheery old men of ninety or thereabouts, who are still working in France, know it to be for a certainty.

We all went there for a year. We were as certain before starting from home as were our anxious parents that in that time we could learn everything that was to be learned without danger to our precious originality, and the most of us stayed at least five years, while some of the men of my student days have never come back. Some of us who did, and who have practised our art here ever since, undoubtedly established the standard of instruction in our art schools; which has since been maintained in a progressive spirit by succeeding home-comers, even as the standard of our exhibitions has grown from the same source.

The student we send from our shores to-day for post-graduate instruction

abroad is perhaps more subject to the varied and changing phases of modern art than is his foreign brother; who knows indeed what is going on near at home and may be in the fore-front of the new movement, but is quite ignorant of the last word of art across the channel or over the frontier beyond Belfort. There is to-day in Europe a vast unrest, a forgetfulness of the route by which art travelled up to the point where it met these modern conditions, and much dispute as to its future course. As always at such times there are a few quiet persons, apparently oblivious to the hubbub raised about them, who go on producing modest masterpieces, cast in quite the old-fashioned mould, as they may have done for years. Others begin their career in painting by strict attention to form, colour, and values, even as did Poussin, Chardin, Prudhon, David, Ingres, Delacroix, Corot, and Millet, to

trace back the vigorous genealogy of French art to its progenitors; whose prior existence is blatantly denied by still others, though their very presence in the field of art would seem to prove the contrary.

It is doubtful, however, if this unrest and discontent with past conditions differs in more than in magnitude of expression from the passions that the time of which I write knew.

The accepted men of to-day—Millet, Puvis de Chavannes, Manet, and Monet —were then the prophets of the future, and who shall say that of the present unrest no good shall come? But, since in our craft we deal with very positive material and dimensional conditions, painting without form or sculpture without structure, which some late hardy spirits appear to attempt, seems foredoomed to brief existence. The men cited above, from Poussin down, were all considered dangerous inno-

"Œdipus," by Ingres, in the Louvre Museum

vators at the outset of their careers. The "Œdipus," by Ingres, which to-day in the Louvre appears to us the quintessence of classical conformity, was greeted by critical Paris, in 1806, with very much the same severity as the painters of the Institute visited upon the "Sower," of Millet, fifty years after. Yet both men, strangely dissimilar as their work appears, were subject to the same classic influence, and equally desirous to interpret nature according to rules which were as old as Greek art. Ingres had simply dared to take a beautiful human form, to draw it with all its characteristics of individuality, without reducing it to a mere copy of an antique statue; Millet had looked upon the figures of the earlier Greeks and had created his man of the fields with the same simplicity of line and of gesture—and these two reverent followers of old traditions were, at fifty years of interval, classed as dangerous innovators.

Therefore it behooves us, children of a later day, to be cautious in our prophecies of ultimate survival, and, though I own that the present vagaries of M. Matisse and some of his followers—French and Franco-American—move me to wonder, it is perhaps as well to imitate the discretion of one of the wisest men that the world has known, and, in the presence of this moot question, to say with old Montaigne, "Who knoweth?"

Above all should I have the grace to adopt this attitude, for my student days were spent in following unbeaten tracks, and to-day I take pride in the fact that any manifestation of art of whatever character has power to excite my keenest interest, however often it may escape my comprehension.

It took me long to find myself, following the time of my first arrival in Paris. At first I entered the atelier of Gérôme in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Here I

found about seventy students crowded into a room that was scarcely large enough for half the number, heated in primitive fashion, by a circular iron stove in which wood was burned, and with windows hermetically closed at all seasons. I mention these physical drawbacks in order that the better hygienic conditions of our modern schools may be appreciated, and also for the reason that the foul air and the difficulty of working in such a compact mass of humanity finally drove me to another atelier and another master.

Of Gérôme as a master I could say much. His long service in the school, lasting forty years and only ceasing shortly before his death, was of incalculable benefit to succeeding generations of painters, and his vitality and interest were such that he never suffered his instruction to become stereotyped and superficial. Principles of sternest classicism he had, and to the last his voice was raised

against some of the modern tendencies of art, tendencies that he had the sorrow to see exemplified in many of his best pupils, so strong is the trend of progressive evolution in art against which conservaatism is arrayed in vain. But with all his conservative spirit, he directed and approved the individuality of expression in the work of certain of his students whose natures were diametrically opposed to his own. I can bear witness that there were none of us working under him, and I can certainly count myself as the least conspicuous of his class, but who felt that his eagle eye kept absolute control of our effort. This among the thousands of pupils that he had already known at the time of my brief sojourn under his influence is sufficiently astonishing.

When we take into consideration that this long and untiring service was given twice a week, two half days taken from his equally astonishing fertility of production,

as a gratuitous service to art, given in return for like benefits enjoyed in his youth, it constitutes an unselfish service for the benefit of his kind that calls for grateful admiration. Each of the masters who are given the direction of the various ateliers of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, ateliers of architecture, painting, and sculpture, three of each, nine in all, receives an annual honorarium of twelve hundred francs, about two hundred and forty dollars, and as they are all men of the highest standing in their professions, the pecuniary sacrifice involved in their honourable service is very considerable. The honour is one, however, that naturally brings recompense of another nature, and the rule of *noblesse oblige* is so effectual that any French artist, outside of the government schools, who finds sufficient following to establish a class of students, gladly serves without any pecuniary reward. The expenses of studio hire, of

models, etc., are borne by subscription among the students, but the master's services are free. It is thus that many of the ateliers of Paris are formed, as was that of Carolus Duran, where I studied later, and here our master, a busy portrait painter, cheerfully gave of his time and his knowledge for the benefit of his younger brothers in art.

It must be remembered that my early experience was somewhat paradoxical. I entered the atelier of Gérôme without previous study of any kind, but I had nevertheless been a producing artist, supporting myself by my work for two years, and had developed a certain facility of invention and a reasonable degree of execution that had brought me some little success in my native land. I was virtually at the threshold of my career however, for I had never followed the definite course of drawing from the cast and from life that marks the first steps of the

student's effort. Consequently I was absolutely submissive when Gérôme, after questioning me, as I wisely concluded to show him none of the work I had done, placed me in the lowest rank of the school. Evidently, however, I had developed in my own manner some little skill in drawing, for after I had made two drawings from the antique my master placed me in the life class, a promotion that at least showed how carefully he judged the first efforts of a strange and new pupil.

In some ways I esteem myself fortunate in thus having escaped what I fear most students consider the "grind" of the antique. Let me hasten to say that I believe there are few men who have a more consistent admiration for antique sculpture than I, or who to this day more frequently lose themselves in its study. It has, as perhaps some of my work may show, been one of the greatest

influences that has profited my effort, in so far as intention counts at least, and I know of no benefit to art greater than that which has resulted from the fortuitous preservation of the immortal works of Greek sculpture.

Later in my life, and from my own experience as a teacher, I have evolved a theory which I would fain see established as a practice in our art schools. It has constantly been borne in upon me, from the attitude of the average student who has passed weeks and months in trying his 'prentice hand in drawing from these noblest creations of art, that their finer essence escapes him. The simplified form, the austere convention of their treatment, removes them from a superficial resemblance to the average human figure, as it appears to the student at the next step of his education; when he enters the life class. Compare, for instance, the Theseus or the Discobolus

with the common variety of model that poses in the school. It seems a pity that these spiritualised renditions of the typical human form, the highest expression of the most gifted artists that the world has known, should be debased to serve as mere rules of grammar, for the halting phrases of the artist before he has learned to speak.

Upon the other hand the immobile statue is undoubtedly the one, and the only one model that we can place before the student in order that he may study the structure and proportion of the human figure. But the world is full of good modern sculpture, where the figures of men and women are modelled in much closer resemblance to the average of the human form as we find it in life than in the subtilised planes and simplified details of Greek sculpture. It is a choice from among these sculptures of the modern school that I would place before our

younger students, and I would jealously treasure these nobler works of Greek art, as a recompense to accord to those more experienced, when their study from life has accentuated a tendency to give too great value to the accidental and individual characteristics of the living model, as a corrective that would reveal to them the nobler element to be incorporated in their work, from the study of this more typical humanity, expressed through the mastery of Phidias or Praxiteles.

In my personal experience at least I am sincerely glad that these works have never been to me other than the highest influence of my artistic life, and that I by chance escaped confounding the Venus of Milo with the blocks or cubes that we labour over in the attempt to train our eyes to see proportion or light and shade.

The Venus of Milo, for that matter, counts for much, as I look retrospectively on these early days. Chance, which

had led me to the Salon on my arrival in Paris, directed my first entrance to the Louvre by the door which faces the garden in the court. A long series of galleries on the ground-floor leads one on, through rooms filled with many examples of antique sculpture, to where, quite at the end of the vista, in a shrine consecrated to her own beauty, the Venus of Milo glimmers like a star. It is an experience that may be common to all who go to Paris, it is one that has never failed to stir my heart on successive visits to the Louvre. Only last summer did this again come true, and it was with much more than retrospective emotion that, each time that I entered the Louvre, I hastened down this long corridor, drawn as though by a magnet to the supreme beauty of this noble work; of which no plaster replica gives more than the superficial aspect of the original marble, still bearing something of the impress of the sculp-

tor's hand, and coloured by time to the transparent glow of living flesh.

I think that as a rule the student of painting is too little affected by the sister art of sculpture. Undoubtedly modern art has suffered from over-specialisation, by which each artist is prone to confine his effort to some one branch of his craft. The earlier men, when by actual practice they were not in turn architects, painters, and sculptors, were in theory at least far more conversant with all the branches of art than we are to-day, when we hear the practitioner of one art avow unblushingly that he knows nothing about the other.

To any student who goes to Paris, however, I strongly urge a systematic study of French sculpture. Within the walls of the Louvre he will find in consecutive order examples of the national spirit as applied to sculpture that will show from the time of the Renaissance until our day that the French have been mas-

ters of form. French painting, which elsewhere in the Louvre can be followed in the same admirable order, suffers in its long history periods and gaps of years when the product of the painter counted little, but since its first inception the school of sculpture has never known such lapses. As an exponent of Gallic effort in art it is even more significant than is French painting of a certain ardent spirit of conception, controlled by a reasoning faculty that permits the artist to give shape to his fancy only when the embryonic idea has become vital and the skill for its expression acquired.

Though, at the time of which I speak, I passed many hours in the sculpture galleries, and though I return there with undiminished interest, it was in the upper galleries of the Louvre, among the paintings, that I fairly revelled. Again I must remind you how much more the student of to-day is familiar with all that was

new to me then as the full glories of this great treasure-house of art were revealed.

Yet to have the great canvas of the "Marriage at Cana," by Paul Veronese, spread before you, to see the glowing colour of Titian's "Entombment," to look into the eyes of Leonardo's "Monna Lisa," or to linger in the enchanted landscape of Giorgione's "Venetian Pastoral," is an experience for which no previous study of photographs from the originals fully prepares you, and is one that the more often you repeat it grows the more in value. These were indeed brave days of youth when the Louvre was new, but I have the testimony of others to add to my own conviction that with each successive visit these works became more precious, more influential, more absolutely necessary to the well-being of the artist, young or old, no matter what may be the aim or the scope of his efforts.

Later visits to Italy have increased my sense of the sum of service that the great artists of the past in the Old World can still render to us children of the New. The true Raphael you will never know by his isolated easel pictures in the galleries, nor until you can gaze upon his great wall paintings in the Vatican, and realise before his "School of Athens" or his "Jurisprudence" that he was not only a master of design, a skilful composer of groups, and a draughtsman where accuracy of form is joined to a style in the rendition of the human figure that none have approached, but a charming colourist as well. Nor do I know a more salutary school for a modern painter than the study of the primitive masters of Italy and those of the fifteenth century. Peculiarly valuable are these works to us in our comparative lack of the long-established traditions that the older nations know, for in this

first flowering of painting, from Giotto onward, we may see how each man went to nature for himself, each succeeding painter wresting from his study some new knowledge to add to that received from his predecessors.

There is so little that is really new in our old art that you may see in some half-effaced fresco on a wall in Florence the portrayal of men and women in their habits as they lived, studied if not actually painted in the open air, with a truth of observation which succeeding generations of painters shut up in their studios, forgot, until, late in the nineteenth century, the beauty of the diffused light of out-of-doors was rediscovered as a triumph of modern painting.

For the artist in the earlier stages of his career there is probably no more useful storehouse of the treasures of art than the Louvre, for virtually all schools are fairly well represented there, and if further

travel be debarred from circumstances of time or money, he is fortunate who has such a fair field to browse upon.

Much of my time I know was spent there when out of school. I early decided that the habit of most of my French friends to pass four hours of the morning working from life was well founded, and that this was as long a time in the day's work as could be put to profit. It is not uncommon with earnest, but I think misguided, students to pass the morning working from life, the afternoon in the school, perhaps in a portrait class, and the evening drawing in the night-school. There are, however, so many elements which should rightly enter into an artist's education, beyond the skill of producing studies in the life class, that four hours' concentration upon such work should be sufficient, leaving the student's mind free to study in the galleries, to work at home upon compositions of his own, or even to

haunt the libraries and learn something of literature; much touching directly upon his own pursuit and all valuable to his larger culture. I had, moreover, Gérôme's own word that after a morning's concentrated effort in rendering the constantly changing aspects of a model, the mind became incapable of more than a mechanical observation and further application mere unintelligent industry.

The closing of Gérôme's atelier for the summer vacation scattered the students in various directions and my persevering good fortune sent me to Barbizon. Here there still lived at that time Jean François Millet, and though my association with him was of the slightest, no one could approach a man of his character without receiving an impress that lasts through life.

He was the highest type of artist that our age has seen. Individual to the degree of isolation from his kind, so that his essentially simple message to the world

was long in penetrating the density of a period of art given up to trivialities and exposition of superficial skill, yet observant of and receptive to every tradition of the great masters of painting, he was as a man equally simple to approach and as a counsellor equally insistent upon the necessity of engrafting present effort on the sturdy trunk of the past. The half-dozen times that I was privileged to speak with him, though the problems which I presented for his solution were only those that assail ignorance and youth, remain in my memory as though it had been my good fortune to hold converse with Boaz, Biblical master of the harvest; or rather with some Virgilian demi-god of the fields, kindly and solicitous in his wise husbandry to direct a youthful gleaner to where the store of grain fell thickest.

Of less import, but yet a most excellent influence for a young man's work, was the

company of painters of all ages and conditions that forgathered in Barbizon in those days. We hear much of the benefits of an artistic atmosphere. Undoubtedly there exists a great incentive to work when many are busily intent upon a common effort, and much progress can be made as we profit by comparing differing renditions of nature, while all may have succeeded in varying degrees in capturing some of her myriad secrets.

It has been and still remains the habit of painters to congregate in various villages of France, and it is pleasant to think that a like good habit has been to some extent transplanted to these shores. Gloucester, in Massachusetts, East Hampton, upon Long Island, and Lyme, in Connecticut, have all known their artist colonists, and each settlement of this kind is fruitful in results. It perpetuates to some extent the beneficial influence of the art school, for it is an

open secret, and may be said without prejudice to the devoted services of the masters who have instructed us, that what we chiefly learn in the atelier we acquire from each other; from the common endeavour to depict the nature before us; by the individual effort of our own personality, aided and guided by the comrade who has made a step in advance.

This first summer in France remains above all memorable to me, for it was there at Barbizon I essayed to paint my first picture. I had only drawn in the life class in Gérôme's atelier, but my two previous years in New York had been devoted to illustration, and I fear that the early foundation of the picture-making habit had more than once made the atelier work irksome, as indeed it did during all my Parisian days in the school.

The picture I attempted was at least little more than a study from life, for I was able to place a peasant mother by

the side of a cradle, her work in her hands as she bent over the child, the whole seen in the surrounding of her home.

This work would hardly be otherwise notable had it not attracted the attention of Munkacsy, the Hungarian painter, who was that summer at Barbizon. From him I received the advice to shun all schooling, to depend upon what he was pleased to call my natural talent, and to boldly set to work to paint a number of compositions which I showed him; for from the first I was fairly prolific in invention and had made many sketches for projected pictures—as I do still—some of which I hope I may live long enough to carry out. Munkacsy's advice was an early instance of the revolt, which has gained force in France since that day, against the teachings of the school. The seed fell upon ground that was fertile so far as my inclinations prompted, but a word from Millet, who simply told me

that I could never talk intelligibly until I had mastered the rules of grammar, promptly arrested the growth of what would most certainly have been a crop of weeds—whatever may be the harvest I have garnered.

Upon my return to Paris, the conditions of the over-crowded atelier in the Beaux-Arts drove me out to be numbered among the newly enlisted pupils of Carolus Duran. Here I, in common with a number of others, men who like John Sargent, Carroll Beckwith, Frank Fowler, Birge Harrison, and Theodore Robinson, among our compatriots have all their part in our present-day art, was to meet with a radical innovation in the teaching of painting. We were all, no matter what our previous lack of familiarity with colour had been, given a model, a palette and brushes, and told to render what we saw.

We apparently saw some very curious aspects of nature, if the report of our

vision could be judged by our productions. But ill-shapen and mud-coloured as were our first studies, a glimmer of essential truth soon penetrated our understanding. Duran's theory was undeniably logical. Objects in nature relieve one against each other by the relative values of light or shade which accompany and are a part of each local colour. An outline, a contour, is, as we all know, a pure convention and the point with which we ordinarily draw is merely a convenient tool for indicating where the mass of one object relieves against another, which, when thus defined, we all know also to be a false method of rendering what we see. We habitually draw, and are taught to do so, a figure upon our white paper, generally modelling it until it presents a light gray mass against the white background, when in reality what we see is a figure which relieves in light against a darker background. This is of course

an accepted convention, as old as art itself, and was probably invented by the traditional cave-dweller, who first sketched the megatherium. It divides, however, the painter's final production into two different and contrary processes and, while it may be wise to facilitate the student's primary acquaintance with form by avoiding the conflicting appeal of colour, it establishes a habit of seeing falsely, which he is forced to correct when he takes up the study of colour.

As was but natural the Duran atelier was considered for a time to be a hot-bed of revolution, and it took no little courage to maintain one's convictions in the face of the censure which loyalty to our master provoked. This was all the more so because there was at first little in the work we produced that appeared to promise ultimate success. But after a time, as the hand became more skilful in the use of pigment, we were able to retain some

semblance of form and to keep our colour reasonably pure, and little by little the atelier was able to vindicate the logic of our master's theories by works which, if not masterpieces, were equal to the average productions of other studios.

Even at this late day and despite the fact that this method has not revolutionised the practice of the schools, I am inclined to think that, if it makes the initial steps more halting, and the pupil's problems temporarily more complex, it gives as a result a greater freedom with the brush, which is the ultimate instrument with which the painter works, and teaches him to see more logically the mass and volume of the objects he depicts in their definite form and colour. It certainly teaches him to avoid what the usual method occasionally leads him to produce, that is to say, a tinted drawing; a work where the painter is so anxious to retain the form once indicated that his

colour is applied timidly, and the completed picture retains the marks of the primary and secondary processes. Since the days of which I speak, I have occasionally tried with pupils of my own to familiarise their hands with the use of pigment by having them paint in monochrome, observing the values carefully and carrying a study in all its relations as far as possible, before allowing them to use colour. This offers a real advantage over any study in complete light and shade in charcoal or crayon, as the material is the same that they will use later on, when they are initiated into the use of full colour.

I could expatiate at great length upon many technical points and describe the conditions of study in Paris, but that since the days of which I speak the life that has grown up and the problems that are met in our own art schools at home duplicate very largely the conditions that then ex-

isted and still exist abroad. It was all new to my youth, but, as I have already said, we have since then established our own schools so nearly upon the model of those of the Old World that a pupil to-day can go almost as far forward in his career technically as he can in Europe.

What we still lack are the elements that would profit the post-graduate of our schools, that yet and for many years to come will make a sojourn abroad, following his scholastic training here, most desirable if not absolutely essential.

In the first place we have not and never can have the great collections that are gathered and jealously guarded in the galleries of Europe. Year by year we have become enriched by examples of the great artists of the past, and the contemporary work of Europe is constantly being brought to us, but for the greater works of the older masters we must seek in the Old World. We shall probably never

be able to obtain a really great work by Paul Veronese, certainly never one of a magnitude of achievement like the "Marriage at Cana," in the Louvre. For the best of Rubens we must seek in a dozen galleries of Europe; for Velasquez we must go to Madrid, which shares the Titians with Italy. How can we ever hope to see a work of Titian like "Sacred and Profane Love," in the Borghese gallery at Rome, on this side of the water? Raphael, as I have already said, reigns in the Vatican and only fully discloses his achievement there,—where he shares the throne with the other archangel,—Michael!

Nor is it by the older art alone that Europe calls new disciples to her. To speak of France, which I know best, the whole long affiliation of its art can only be followed in the Louvre and in its rich provincial museums. Only last summer I, who fancied that I knew Millet's art

as thoroughly as one who has never neglected an opportunity to see the slightest of his works could know it, saw for the first time in the museum at Rouen the portrait of a naval officer painted by him that, differing in manner, Velasquez might have signed. And so in various parts of France you may come upon works which are absolutely necessary to a full knowledge of their best men.

Even in the sales which occur here we have not yet learned to keep the best, and the other day in New York, Berlin took back to Europe a Rubens from the Yerkes collection, a picture far more typical than any that we have by that master in our museums. Not so many years ago at the sale of the collection belonging to Jules Stewart, of Paris, which was brought to New York for disposal, we found means to purchase for forty thousand dollars a charming and toy-like production of Fortuny,—"veritable

"Portrait of a Marine Officer," by J. F. Millet, in the Museum at Rouen

microcosm of virtuosity" that it is—and permitted enlightened emissaries from France to repurchase and bear triumphantly back to their country Baudry's masterpiece, "The Pearl and the Wave," for the pitiful sum of six thousand dollars.

But if Europe can still offer us opportunities for the fuller knowledge of the past of art, the best of its offering and the most useful for the upbuilding of our adolescent school at home is the larger understanding of the scope of our undertaking. Every American artist who has existed so far or will exist for years to come should be born with a missionary spirit. His best preaching will be by what he produces; in the measure that his art is high in aim and proficient in skill, so will he be listened to, when he chooses to talk—for our people dearly love to hear about art already. But this readiness to learn imposes a duty upon us all to be able by example and precept to instruct.

For all that Europe can still teach our artists, a summer holiday will not suffice. It is necessary to dig deeper into the soil in which art has flourished. It is necessary to adopt principles which may be at variance with many of our accepted ideas at home, our dominant love for quick results, for instance. We may even condemn ourselves to be considered failures, if we do not follow each changing fashion in art as it appears. But for our own self-respect, and for our ultimate influence upon the environment in which we live, we can do a few simple things, if we cherish our convictions and if we love our art.

First, we may earn our living in any way we are permitted to do so, and live as modestly as possible, knowing that every penny saved from useless expenditure we can put into our work. Secondly, we can uphold the ancient honour of our craft by never counting

the quality of our product by the quantity of its remuneration. If you are poorly paid in money, find recompense in the work; it is the artist's way. Thirdly, if your task is prescribed by which you earn your bread, imitate the ancient apprentices of our guild and consecrate every leisure moment to some work which shall represent you at your best; keep at it until you know that it is the best you can do; it may spell freedom from your irksome task, it will in any case serve to keep alive the flame of art and embolden your comrade to do as much. Fourthly, and lastly, remember that already here we see the dawn of a greater art, in the growth of our schools, in the quality of our work, and above all in its acceptance for civic uses in our public buildings. In this instance we no longer paint pretty pictures for "generous" patrons; as in a sister-art the day of the Soldiers' Monument furnished by a granite company

is past, and our sculptors are busy enriching our land with noble works. This has been the work of the men of my generation, and the lessons of the larger outlook and the higher standard were learned from our *Alma Mater* of the Old World.

Of some of the growth of this higher standard of the men who have worked here at home in the past thirty years I wish to speak later, but the evidences of this growth are already evident to a larger world than ours. We can still go far afield for public confirmation of what some few of us know well. Thirty years ago there were two American painters who were *hors concours* in the Paris Salon; to-day there are thirty-six living painters and sculptors of American birth who have in this Old World of art attained that honour and are accepted as the peers of their elder brothers of French birth by the artistic tribunals of France.

Few of the liberal professions as practised in our New World have achieved like numerical recognition abroad, and, though our artists are as yet largely prophets without honour in their own country, such confirmation of their effort by the Old World is a title which will eventually be recognised at home and constitutes a definite claim upon our environment to be recognised as an asset of our national patrimony.

This again I say is the work of the men of my generation, many of whom are still upon the field, as eager and untiring in their efforts as at the dawn of their labour. Recruits are welcome and cannot be too numerous, for the field is vast, the yield promises abundance, and the harvest is not for the day. The seed of the future is sown in the schools we have established, and by the hands of this new generation must the harvest be gathered.

V

THIRTY YEARS AT HOME AND ABROAD

France had been kind to me in more ways than I can tell, and the five years of my student life there had endowed me with grateful and enduring affection for my foster-mother of the arts. Yet, in the closing days of 1877, as the ship that bore me homeward came in sight of these shores, my heart leaped up with a sensation, which has grown with the elapsing years, that this was my own country, these were my own people, here was to be the field in which I was to labour—whatever the harvest was to be.

Time has shown that this year, 1877, was a crucial moment for American art. From the days of Copley nearly all our

artists had sought their education abroad. But the conditions of isolation, in which we lived before the time of the present swift transatlantic ferries, are not conducive to the progress of art, though this isolation had given to our artists a fruitful field for their endeavour devoid of all competition. Consequently our earlier men, in developing a distinctive school, as they did undeniably, had fallen into an error common to all human effort that is deprived of the healthy stimulus of emulation. New York, as I have already related, had been generous to its artists, and had aided them to erect a handsome building for the National Academy of Design, which until 1897 remained, with its close resemblance to the Doge's Palace in Venice, one of the ornaments of the city. Here were held exhibitions which for a long period had been the chief artistic events of the year, which were thronged by visitors who were

appreciative of our artists' intent and lavish in their material encouragement.

It is interesting to seek out nowadays the earlier works of some of the men who were prominent in our art in the time of which I speak, and note that these productions, painted under the influence of the traditions of the schools where they studied in the Old World, are fairly equal to the standards of the Europe of their day. Standards change and, when art is healthy, are progressive, but there is no one condition so essential to its well-being as a constant infusion of new blood. This our native school had lacked, and in the presence of a public whose demands were easily satisfied, lacking the comparison of other and more vigorous productions of art, its effort had become relaxed.

Meanwhile the material growth of the country had attracted the attention of the picture dealers of Europe, and to the new

market for their wares they had flocked, as they still do, in increasing numbers, and by the novelty of their offering, if not always by its greater intrinsic merit, a diversion of our encouragement of native art was firmly established. Such were the conditions already existing when, in the spring of 1877, the Hanging Committee of the National Academy Exhibition was suddenly confronted by six or eight pictures, large in dimensions in comparison with the cabinet-size to which the majority of the works contributed were restricted, and of a style which contrasted strangely with the average of the academical productions.

They were the works of young Americans studying either in Paris or Munich, who, without concerted action, had chosen that year to show to their compatriots for the first time the result of their studies abroad. It speaks much for the liberality of this now historic Hanging Committee

that it gave prominent places in the exhibition to these new works; which in vigour of treatment, in the application of their measure of skill, made up for any lack of definite achievement; inherent to all first works, however much of promise they may evince.

Most of these young painters were still abroad, and there each learned for the first time that his individual effort had been multiplied by the offerings of the others; with the effect that the whole appeared like a concerted invasion into an ancient stronghold of American art by a band of young iconoclasts, who had only their birth in their favour, as in all other qualities they were considered aliens. Such at least was the verdict of the more conservative Academicians, though, as afterward transpired, the grudging welcome accorded to these works was confined to a few who had the ear of certain art critics, who made the most of what

they termed a quarrel in the camp of the artists. For that matter, to this day the average journalist, when he treats of art, dearly loves to introduce spicy personal gossip to relieve the tedium of the simple consideration of the qualities or defects of a given production. Consequently there ensued a wordy war in the press, for the young invaders found their partisans, which had as a result the formation of a new art organisation which took the name of the Society of American Artists.

A number of the Academecians promptly joined the new society—John La Farge, Homer Martin, Samuel Colman, Thomas Moran, George Inness, R. Swain Gifford, Louis C. Tiffany, and A. Wordsworth Thompson—all of them men who recognised the desirability of a more active competition of effort than was possible in the Academy as then organised. This robbed the new movement of any out-

ward appearance of opposition to the older association, which, under the stimulus of friendly rivalry, at once began a gradual reorganisation that finally resulted, though only after twenty-seven years of the society's existence, in a union of the two bodies. To anticipate in this record by all these twenty-seven years, I may say that the National Academy of Design realises to-day all that the most advanced founders of the Society of American Artists desired to attain, in so far that every producing artist of merit throughout the country is added to its membership as fast as the machinery of election, which is entirely in the hands of its members, can be made to perform its function. Its laws governing the exhibition of the works of its members are as liberal as those of any art society in existence, inasmuch as none of them are exempted from the action of the Jury of Selection, except for a single work. As this

exemption automatically places the privileged production in a secondary class, the majority of the members prefer to submit their works to the jury and seldom use their right to this privilege.

In election of juries, in nomination of Academicians and election of Associates, in all the purely artistic administration of the affairs of the Academy, every member, be he Academician or Associate, is given equal power. The executive administration of the affairs of the organisation is necessarily performed by Academicians resident in New York, chiefly by a council of ten of its members elected by the whole body at its annual meeting. The wise liberality of this elastic constitution places all artists, whether members or not, upon an equal footing, where the merit of their production is the sole consideration governing its acceptance for exhibition.

The National Academy is the oldest organisation of artists in the country,

counting eighty-four years of existence, and since its rejuvenation in 1907, by its union with the Society of American Artists, and its adoption of these liberal principles, there is no barrier to its becoming, in fact as well as in name, a national society, representing all the artists of the country and every manifestation of the arts of design. This would of course include what we know as the applied arts, as well as architecture, painting, and sculpture, and it would appear as though its founders in 1826 had foreseen some such comprehensive inclusion when they chose for its name the National Academy of the Arts of Design.

Unfortunately for the best service of a society as universal as this, the organisation as yet possesses no galleries sufficiently extensive to carry out this desirable programme. The main activity of its council for a number of years past has sought to procure such galleries, and

sooner or later New York will undoubtedly furnish an adequate building where each year a comprehensive exhibition of art could show how great and varied is our annual production. When this day comes we shall have what the great cities of England, France, Germany, and Italy have long possessed, and it needs no spirit of prophecy to foretell that our whole country will feel both pride and surprise at what we have already accomplished in art.

This partial survey of present conditions contrasts strangely in spirit with those which confronted the home-coming youths of 1877. The half-dozen young painters who had shown their maiden efforts at the Academy that spring found themselves in New York in the early winter. Walter Shirlaw, William M. Chase, Wyatt Eaton, Frederick Dielman, J. Alden Weir, Frank Duveneck, and myself were those that I remember as having large pictures in

this exhibition, where the contribution of Augustus Saint-Gaudens had been refused, and to these, in the formation of the new Society, were promptly added, besides Saint-Gaudens, Olin L. Warner, Francis Lathrop, A. P. Ryder, Louis C. Tiffany, Helena de Kay Gilder, and the Academicians already named, all these last being resident in New York. This is not in strict chronological order, as Shirlaw, Saint-Gaudens, Eaton, and Mrs. Gilder were alone present at the formation and first meeting of the Society in June, 1877, immediately at the close of the Academy exhibition.

Speaking for myself, the life that now confronted me was very different not only from that which I had led in Paris during the preceding five years, but from that which I had known in New York before going abroad. The student in Paris, or, indeed, the mature artist of birth foreign to France, has every facility

accorded him for his work, but he is never consulted, never allowed to take part in the conduct of any of the affairs of art. The juries of every exhibition are exclusively French, and the thousand and one duties which here fall to the lot of every artist sooner or later, concerning what I may call the administrative side of art, are there so many positions of preference, often leading to honours which are jealously kept for the benefit of the natives. As for my previous experience in New York, I was then so little affiliated with the current art of the time that I escaped such service, or rather it escaped me.

But to us home-comers it soon became evident that if we wished to see any change in the manner in which art was conducted in our own country, it behooved us to put our hands to the work and begin the changes ourselves. Therefore there followed interminable meetings, in which

ways and means were discussed at length. We were mostly without money and without credit, but by some means a sum sufficient to rent a small gallery was raised, and the first exhibition of the Society of American Artists was held in the spring of 1878. The Society had grown to perhaps twenty members, some of whom had brought home with them pictures painted abroad, and word had been sent to our comrades in Europe, who sent over work. John Sargent's first work exhibited in America was shown there, a group of fisher girls on the beach at Cancale. We had a goodly sprinkling of works by men in New York, a number by members of the Academy among them. From our meagre funds we despatched one of our members to Baltimore, to borrow a picture by Whistler. This picture, the first of his works shown in America, reappeared only this winter in New York, to be heralded far and wide by a dealer

as an important example of Whistler's art, its first exhibition in the Society thirty-two years ago evidently forgotten. Our modest show was considered an artistic success, and its expenses were met by the door receipts, supplemented by the annual dues of ten dollars exacted from each member of the Society. This was the financial experience of the whole twenty-seven years of the Society's existence, no exhibition, so far as I remember, meeting its expenses from attendance or commissions on the sale of pictures and catalogues, and each deficit being covered year after year by the members' annual dues. This welcome aid from members' dues the Academy has not inherited, in taking over other duties and benefits, from the Society—but the work goes on cheerfully, nevertheless, and will until the day when the artists can control an exhibition as comprehensive of our effort as the Royal Academy in London and the

Salon in Paris are of their respective countries, where the door receipts largely exceed the cost of maintaining the exhibition.

In my personal experiences I found many changes and some disappointments. In no part of the world can one go away even for a year with a greater certainty that his place will be filled, and his absence hardly noted, than in our country. The current sweeps on, no one seems to be really essential in the flux and reflux of our tide of life, and the chances of submersion, to even the strongest swimmer, are measurably great unless he breasts the flood without missing a stroke.

To a youth who had been absent five years and then returned, his heart upon his sleeve, expecting to find old comrades unchanged and the conditions of life similar to those he had left, the realities that he found were sufficiently disconcerting. The very streets were different.

New York had continued to move uptown, as I suppose it had begun to do before I knew it, and the haunts of my earlier years had changed beyond recognition, as no doubt on my part I too had changed. In common with others who had shared my pleasant exile in France, I presume that I was a trifle homesick for the conditions of life across the water, despite the growing pride that I felt to be a part of the activity of our new Society and the hope that it would be, as it eventually became, influential in the betterment of our art at home.

But by far the most disconcerting condition that I met was the fact that, having spent these five years in acquiring some notion of the art of painting, there was not the slightest discoverable desire on the part of my compatriots to encourage me to paint, nor even permit me to do so, by purchasing my work. In this I shared the misfortune of my comrades newly re-

turned from abroad like myself. In the Academy some of the older men kept, and kept to themselves, a certain clientèle who purchased their works, though the sales in their exhibitions had already fallen off considerably from the handsome sums realised in the years immediately following the Civil War.

In addition, the picture dealers found a ready sale for foreign works of art, for it was then and for a few years after that the market for contemporaneous work, especially by French artists, was at its best, and I heard from French friends in Paris of their extreme contentment at the flood of Yankee dollars which flowed in their direction. It was during these years that so many French painters built handsome little private hotels and studios, in which they entertained delightfully American millionaires sojourning in Paris, who paid royally for the entertainment, until, the millionaire being a fickle

person at the best, in these later years his taste has been educated to the appreciation of the Old Masters—of which the modern dealer commands an apparently inexhaustible store.

But in the Society exhibitions it was notorious that no one sold anything; we were popularly supposed to be producing art for art's sake, and we were left severely alone to that delightful occupation. Purchasing art for art's sake had not then dawned on the horizon of possibility—if indeed to-day it may be said to be a general practice.

From much that I have already said it will appear that I am a firm believer in the work of art as an article of commerce. Not in so far as regards its production, for there it is and should remain the one great paradoxical effort of man—an object fashioned by his skill, of which the joy of the making must so far reward the labour of its maker that in its production he has

no thought of the price accorded or desired. But like all other work of the human hand, once produced it becomes an object that has a price, and the artist may be properly solicitous that its value should be considered sufficient to afford him the means of existence; for this is a matter of elementary common-sense, of which quality our craft is in no respect deficient.

There are many good and substantial reasons, however, why it would be preferable that the artist should not be actively engaged in vending his wares, the greatest of these being that his product is so much a part of his personality that he is placed in a somewhat perilous position for his dignity as a man, if he uses his native intelligence in the game of barter and sale. Hence the desirability of having dealers in works of art who can act as intermediaries between the producer and the consumer, as in all other branches

of commerce, or the practice of exposing works for sale in our exhibitions; which thus serve a double purpose by affording an opportunity for the practitioner and his public to judge the merit of his work by comparison with that of others of his craft, and a market for the disposal of his product.

We have the dealers and we have the exhibitions, but it can hardly be said that these agencies act in a satisfactory or even logical manner. In the earlier days of our craft there were guilds of artists, endowed with authority, under which young apprentices worked in the acquisition of skill until such time as they felt that they had attained a certain mastery. Then they submitted a specimen of their work to the council of the guild, who, if it was found worthy, liberated them from their apprenticeship and declared them accepted workmen upon the merit of their "masterpiece"—a word which

has since been distorted from this early and primary signification.

This fixed the rank of the producer and his work at once acquired a marketable value, greater or less undoubtedly as his product pleased the consumer of the time, the prototype of the collector, connoisseur, or the simple amateur of our day. Our modern habit has become far less definite than this. Acceptance in the Salon is taken in Paris as a substitute for the decision of a guild to some extent, and its catalogue is at once referred to by the dealer when an unknown man presents his work to him for sale, to verify the newcomer's claim to that honour.

Here we have no exhibition whose verdict would establish definite distinction between the aspiring student and the accepted artist. Indeed I know an instance where one of our greatest painters was waited upon by a young artist who desired to become his assistant in some im-

portant decorative work. To show his fitness for the employ, the younger man had brought a number of specimens of his work, and of one of these he remarked, with justifiable pride, that it had been accepted and hung in the exhibition of the Society of American Artists the year before. "Yes, I remember it very well," answered the master, with whimsical sadness, "the jury threw out my contribution that year."

With so inchoate a standard as this, which denies years of competent and applauded production, and temporarily lifts to notoriety some novel work by a newcomer, who may or may not maintain the position thus accorded (this being a not uncommon practice of our juries of selection during the exercise of their brief authority), it is evident that even to-day we have no real and authoritative means of fixing the definite position of the artist.

In the days of which I speak there

was even less. We, the home-comers of 1877 and the few succeeding years, were trained in our craft as very few of the practising and accepted artists of the time were educated. We were still students in a certain sense,—as I hope we have remained and shall remain to our dying day,—but we were capable of more than holding our own with many of our former comrades, who, during the period that we, strangers in our own land, had passed abroad acquiring the rudiments of our art, had stayed in New York and by local authority were considered full-fledged and acceptable artists. Naturally we were met on all sides by the hack criticism that we had lost something of the pristine glory of our native originality by going to acquire definite technical ability in the art of painting in foreign schools—where alone it was well taught in those days. There were curious contradictions in this reception accorded to

us foreign-bred youths, and I remember one of my comrades remarking, "So and so is loud in blaming us for studying in Europe, but I notice that he is always ready to help himself to a free-lunch of some of the knowledge we have brought back."

Thus it appeared for a number of years that our new insight and our comparative skill in painting was a drug in the home market. The collector of American art had not then shown signs of life, though he has grown and grown in numbers, most fortunately, in the subsequent decades, and the picture dealer was busy in purveying to the demand for foreign works. In this respect also there is a change for the better which has seen the establishment of dealers of American birth and sympathies and a consequent adoption of their methods by dealers of foreign birth.

It must be understood that when I speak of dealers it is with no sense of blam-

ing these gentlemen for their commercial estimate of art. This is quite as it should be. They are simply men of taste who have invested a capital in support of their judgment, and who are justified in making, as indeed they are obliged to make, this investment as fruitful of results as is possible. Like art itself, the commerce in works of art is subject to no fixed standard and their methods are necessarily arbitrary and fluctuate according to new conditions as they may arise. For a period, when at last they found it advantageous to deal in American works, the presence of the producer upon the scene of their commerce in his product was thought to be detrimental, for what reason I know not.

But I know of an instance of one of our painters of long residence in Paris who during his sojourn there was able to count upon the purchase of two or three of his works annually, which were selected by a

New York dealer on the occasion of his yearly visits to his Paris studio. Meeting this dealer one day in the streets of that city, the painter was told that in a few days a visit for the purpose of selecting some of his work was proposed. "You must hurry," my friend remarked, "for I am packing my things to go home." "On a visit to America?" inquired the dealer. "No, to settle there." "Indeed, well in that case I had better wait and come to your studio in New York," was the dealer's decision. My friend adds that from that day to this the dealer in question has never made the promised visit, and has never purchased another of his works.

An incident like this may pass as one of the mysteries of the picture trade, which, as I have before remarked, has little to do with art in the sense that the artist best likes to consider his craft. But it is a not uncommon error upon the

part of the artist to deplore the immense profits that the dealer is supposed to make at the expense of the producer of the wares in which he traffics. Granting that such reports may not be grossly exaggerated, the artist has no right to complain if the dealer can find a market which leaves him no matter what margin of profit. It is the dealer's business to do so if possible, and such demand for his works indirectly profits the artist in giving him freedom to produce; which in turn is his sole business, so long as he can exact a living wage for his production. Consequently that artist is fortunate who through his relations with a dealer is enabled to carry on his work with no other preoccupation than to do the best of which he is capable, and he is even more fortunate if the dealer can realise a hundred per cent. upon his investment, for it will mean greater liberty of longer duration for his best effort.

Any one of these pilgrims of art, from whose early career I continually digress, would have gladly welcomed a dealer in those days, but these shy gentlemen never appeared and we were driven to many expedients to secure a foothold in our native land.

Retrospect is far easier than foresight, but in looking back and considering, as I am endeavouring to do, the practical questions of an artist's existence then and now, it seems to me that there were many who were short-sighted in those early days. From this practical point of view it is regrettable, both for the artist and the possible purchaser, that our exhibitions were devoid of financial result. The attendance at the exhibitions of the Society of American Artists was sparse, but still there were a certain number of people who came, and these were presumably drawn from a class that professed an interest in art. I can hardly claim that

those of the artists who have survived from the date of the foundation of the Society have seen such great appreciation in the value of their work as to make speculation in their early productions one that would bring more than a hundred per cent. of profit to-day. But there are others more fortunately situated, from the accepted point of view that an artist's reputation is never really established during his lifetime. We have had to deplore the death of several of the men active in the pioneer effort of the Society, and the work that they left has risen very greatly in value.

It is curious to note in the catalogue of the first exhibition of the Society of American Artists in 1878 the prices of the works by some of these men as printed therein. An Inness at three hundred and twenty-five dollars or a Wyant for two hundred and fifty would not blush unseen by our collectors of to-day!

Homer Martin's work is a notable instance of this appreciation, certain pictures of his now selling for more thousands than the painter during his lifetime demanded, often unavailingly, hundreds. A little picture of which I am the fortunate possessor, one of the first contributions of Theodore Robinson to our Society exhibition, still bears marked plainly on the back of the frame the mention of its price of seventy-five dollars. No one in those days cared enough for the picture or was wise enough for the investment to pay this modest price, and my friend gave it to me long ago, but to-day our collectors are eager for pictures from his brush.

I know, in fact, few better examples of the manner in which an artist's reputation among his fellows has little reflex action upon the collectors or purchasers of works of art than is shown by the career of Theodore Robinson. During all his too short life, he received the continued ap-

probation of his craft, and such honours as we can award in our exhibitions fell to his lot, while some of us who had the means of approaching our few collectors of American art were loud in praise of his work and insistent that it should be purchased. All without avail, and had not Robinson been endowed with a Spartan spirit, contenting himself with little so long as he was permitted to paint, and extreme frugality, with which he eked out his modest resources to that end, he would not only have suffered extreme hardship, but his effort would have become paralysed through non-success. It sufficed that he should die to make his work appreciated; but as its qualities had long been recognised by his fellow painters, it would seem as though some ray of their enlightenment might have penetrated the intelligence of a larger public, and by needed encouragement have stimulated the production of the gifted painter.

"A Wisconsin Pastoral," by Theodore Robinson, 1880, in possession of the author

The slightest frequentation with artists would enlighten any lover of art as to the men who are considered as possessing merit in their work by the general consensus of their craft, and it would be easy for such a lover of art, even if possessed of only moderate means, to form a collection of good work by men of promise. Our exhibitions show many such works which their young producers would be glad to sell for small sums, and such examples would from the first give pleasure from their possession and in the end might prove very fortunate investments for their purchasers.

As it is, the formation of a collection or the acquisition of a single picture is regarded by us as a luxury reserved for the very rich. In fact it is quite within the means of the average well-to-do citizen to own distinctive and original works of art, whose sale would encourage the young artist and enable him to add to

the value of the work thus sold by advancing, through further production, the day when his former patron would awake to discover how lucky he had been to discern early merit.

Naturally, it had appeared to me that as I had been able to earn my living in New York five years before, the task would be easier with the added capacity which my study had given me when I returned there at the end of that period. But such was not the case, and the devotion of my effort to painting had moreover made it difficult to resume the practice of illustration, though in one sense the way had been made easier, for the illustrators no longer drew upon wood. Photography had intervened and the designs made in any medium were thus transferred to the wood and then engraved; for the half-tone, which in turn destroyed the art of wood engraving and is now universally used, was then unknown.

I found some little illustration to do, but for some reason I could not convince the art editors that I was best fitted to do work of an imaginative character, with the result that certain subjects were alloted to me with which, though I tried to do my best, I could accomplish but little. Some of the criticisms which my patriotic friends lavished upon the foreign character of my painting also struck home. I knew that my sympathy with the ideals of the Old World was strong, but I ardently desired to be a good American, for my loyalty to my country and my pride in my birthright had never wavered.

At this juncture one of my friends offered me a commission to paint a picture, the subject of which was to be chosen from the works of Longfellow or Whittier. This fell in with my mood of proving that I was as loyal as the most loyal of my compatriots, and I set about to find some place in the country which had retained

all the characteristics of an American village, unaffected by foreign immigration.

Such a place I found off the coast of New England, at Nantucket, and thither I went into voluntary exile to regain the birthright my friends had almost convinced me I had lost through my sojourn in France. For two years I stayed there, only returning to New York for one winter, supporting myself by illustration, executed under the most trying conditions, for I could seldom obtain proper models for the work sent me; which, of all things in the world to be conceived and executed in a New England village, consisted principally of subjects drawn from the Old Testament.

Meanwhile, during the season when painting could be carried on out-of-doors, during the best part of the two summers of my exile, I was at work on my painting. I had finally chosen a subject from Whittier, representing the concluding scene of

his ballad of "Skipper Ireson's Ride." This entailed a composition of some forty figures, suitable types for which I found among the people of the town, and the resulting picture was entirely painted in the open air. It was of course by far my most ambitious effort up to that time, and, to make a long story short, it was finally finished and shown in the exhibition of the Society of American Artists in 1881. I had found the isolation of my life in Nantucket extremely hard to one like myself, who had been accustomed to live surrounded by comrades intent upon the same occupation as my own, and profiting as much as I had by the helpful criticism or encouragement which such conditions imply. When I returned to New York, moreover, after this long absence, I found, as was but natural, that in the interval what notice had been taken of me as one of the little band of painters who had returned two years

before was quite forgotten. The place that I might have made for myself during that time had been secured by others, for the period was one that saw the return of many young painters from Europe.

The exhibition of my picture excited but little interest in so far as its subject was concerned, for changes come so quickly in the convictions of our public that the number of works either sent home from our artists abroad or brought back by our returning painters had apparently quite reconciled the former critics to the choice of themes of a foreign character. Some little praise was given to my effort for certain qualities of painting, but no great patriotic emotion seemed to be stirred by it—somewhat to my relief, to tell the truth, for the experience had taught me a valuable lesson. It is never worth while to shape your efforts by the dictation of others; embody in your work your own aspirations.

"Skipper Ireson," by Will H. Low, 1880–1881, now in possession of Albany Art and Historical Society

If by doing the work that expresses your own personality you can awaken the interest of others, well and good. Your success is near. But if by chance you cannot at once elicit this response, turn to other work for your support and do it as well as you can, meanwhile never losing your hold upon the one character of work which in your inmost heart you know is your own. Make every effort, use all the leisure that your bread-winning permits you, to carry on for your proper satisfaction some such personal work, for if you are predestined to achieve success, it will eventually be won by the work which thus expresses your highest aspiration, and by no other.

For me at this period of my career there came a most fortunate interval in the shape of employment as assistant in some decorative work of John La Farge. Here for the first time I found a practical outlet for a decorative intent which had

theretofore found issue only in various schemes and sketches, but which had never from the first been entirely absent from my effort. This happy interval only lasted for a year, however, for the present opportunities of mural painting had not then made more than a rare occasional appearance, and twelve years were to elapse before I was able to secure decorative work of my own. Once more I turned to illustration, and I am more than willing to forego the narration of my experiences for the next few years. In painting what little I accomplished I tried to make as significant as possible of the decorative character which I desired my work to express, but the necessities of life kept me for the most part of my time at work at illustration of a kind that, do my best, I could not do very well.

Yet it was to be eventually illustration that was to procure my liberation from

drudgery, of which I will only say that I hope none of my younger brothers in art may be forced to endure anything like it—at least for any longer period than I did.

It was at the close of 1877 that I returned to New York. It was in the spring of 1885 that a publishing house proposed to me that I should undertake a small illustrated book, the drawings to accompany some poem of my choice.

There was no intention on the part of the publishers to produce more than a small Christmas holiday book, of which each year at that time it was their custom to bring out several. But to me it appeared the chance of my life. I had some difficulty in obtaining my publisher's consent to my choice of a poem, for with the deliberate intention to submit to no influence other than a desire to do what I felt I could do best, I had taken one of the less well-known of the poems of one

of the greatest, but at the same time least popular, of English poets, the "Lamia" of John Keats.

Not long before I had read in a literary journal a report of the comparative sales of a standard edition of the poets published by an English house, and the works of John Keats were at the foot of the list, with a total sale of twenty copies in the course of the year. Eight months later two thousand copies of one of his poems in an expensive edition, selling for fifteen dollars, had found a market, and as I trust that every one who looked at my drawings read "Lamia," I take no little pride in having been the means of a slight accession of interest in the work of this great poet.

Eight months was the time allotted me for my work, time which appeared ample to my publishers who at the outset had little idea of the scope that I proposed to give to the book, which, day by day, and

week by week, increased in size, quality of paper, printing, and reproductions of my drawings, under the arguments I advanced, backed, I venture to say, by the quality of my designs, which from the first took on a character rather unusual in book illustration. The drawings are well enough known, and I think I may say that nearly every one is designed more in the manner of a decoration than as an illustration. I endeavoured to treat all the larger designs as though the figures were the size of life, and knowing that the method of reproduction would render the most delicate values, I tried in their effect to give each drawing the character of a painting, lacking only the colour. I worked through the summer months literally night and day, having two superb models, a man and a woman, engaged permanently, using one and then the other as necessity arose during the daylight hours, and working on the backgrounds

and accessories by the artificial light of night. More than once I worked all night. It is not the method of work that I should recommend, but necessity drove, and when a man finds his chance he must let nothing stand in his way to prevent its accomplishment.

Though long before the end I had induced my publishers to share a large part of my enthusiasm, I felt the responsibility of having persuaded them to embark in an enterprise far more hazardous and demanding a much greater outlay of capital than they had originally intended. But I was determined to "make good," and from some indications that cheered me on the way, I was encouraged to believe I should.

At last, shortly before Christmas, a finished copy of the book was sent me, the margins, the type, the decorations in the text, the larger and smaller figure drawings, the cover design, every smallest detail of my choice and the work of my hands.

The reception of the work was more favourable than I had dared hope. Now that the original drawings have found a permanent home and are superbly displayed in the Chicago Art Institute, I can after these many years look on them with something of the critical spirit with which I could look on another's work. I can regard them as an incident in the life of a young artist who had followed many false routes, who had met with little encouragement, who had been despaired of by others, though at the worst he had kept alive some small faith in himself, and at last, taking, as the French say, his courage in both hands, had made an effort to break the bonds in which circumstance, partially created by his own mistakes, had enmeshed him.

Such success as it was, was chiefly due to the lesson learned from experience that it is useless to seek definite expression along the route of another's choosing.

I had the courage to risk being unpopular, to link my fortunes with an unread poet, to take a subject that presumably few would care for, but from the inherent truth of the old fable that is as new today as it was in the early morn of Greece, that tells of life, love, and death which are still as near us as they were in the dawn of time, I was able to express some particle of this essential human problem in such wise that my little world stood still for a moment to give me a hearing.

I have ventured to be explicit, and possibly a trifle vainglorious, over this first success, that gave me some measure of freedom to express my little message to the world. My liberation had come to me in my thirty-third year, when I had nearly doubled the age that I had when I began my independent career. It was a long time for one whose every waking hour had been unceasingly devoted to his art, but I am convinced that

many more years would have passed before I should have struggled out of the slough of despond—if, indeed, I had ever succeeded in freeing myself—had I not determined to do my own work in my own way. That way fortunately is open to every one; it only demands a little independence of spirit, a careful weighing of the quality with which each one of us is born that differs from the quality of others. It is a very old counsellor that commands each of us, "Know thyself," but we are so constituted that the easy way tempts us to follow in the beaten track, to become one of a herd and to lose our identity in the dust that rises along the route where it passes.

There are few great successes in art, but there are many small ones. To these last we may pretend, if only we dare to be individual, and the smallest of these serve to make up the sum of art. The work of the individual coral insect is

almost microscopic, but the work of many rears the curiously fashioned reef against which the wave of ocean beats in vain. So the history of art is filled with islets reared above the waves of oblivion, wrought by men who laboured in the joy of their art—and sometimes builded better than they knew. There is an artist of whom until a few years ago not very many knew, and of his life and history comparatively little is known even now. He lived and worked in a little town in Holland, from which circumstance we know him as Ver Meer of Delft. His work is as modest in its dimensions as his subjects are modest in their pretense. A woman clasping around her neck a necklace before a mirror, a woman, plain of feature, in surroundings that are simple, is one of these—a most beautiful picture in the Berlin Museum. Equally simple are the subjects of the few pictures by him, about thirty in number, that

"The Pearl Necklace," by Ver Meer of Delft, in the Berlin Museum

are known. In each there is some magic in the lighting, some integrity of workmanship, some expression of the love of truth, that lifts these little panels from the realm of the commonplace to that of great and unusual achievement. But if the achievement is unusual, the materials remain commonplace, and, given capacity equivalent to, though different from, that of Ver Meer, there is no reason why you or I should not, from the world about us, or from some fancy of the brain, express an equally individual, though again different, message to the world. "A message to the world" seems a pompous phrase, but I find no other, for to leave behind us in our passage through life no matter how little evidence of our effort, is a communication established with our kind and a message to posterity.

Ver Meer did not consciously do more, for he could not know as he painted the simple subjects which pleased him, with

no other thought than to make each work as perfect as his skill permitted, that three hundred years after his death, in our twentieth century, the museums of the world would struggle for the possession of his few pictures.

There are few greater obstacles spread in the path of the young artist, however, than the difficulty of discovering, among the many tempting vistas that radiate from the straight and narrow way of his native and natural expression, the one thing that he is best fitted to do. As I have already said, the modern artist is the heir of the ages, and the wealth of past effort which is familiar to him constitutes an embarrassment of riches among which it is difficult to pick and choose. The earlier men who have created this vast store were not subject to this distracting influence, and they were less diverted than are the modern men by all that had been done by others. It is difficult for the

modern painter to accept and follow the dictum of Kipling, and,

> "Each in his separate star, draw the thing as he sees it,
> For the god of things as they are."

This difficulty is increased by an equal variety in our modern influences. To anyone who has been a witness to the conflicting efforts of the past thirty years, however, it seems evident that the men who have been true to their own convictions are those who have succeeded. They have gone on in their own quiet way, not incurious of the work which has been done by others, watching the growth of this movement, its acceptance or its decline, the uprising of another influence, each of these in turn heralded as the ultimate solution of the problem of modern art. From all these various and changing influences they have perhaps added something to their own store of expres-

sion, but in the main they have remained true to the principles they first adopted, true to themselves, true to the effort of expressing their best thought in the vernacular of their own individuality.

It has fallen to my lot, since those early days I have endeavoured to describe, to be a witness to our endeavour at home as I have been to much of the effort abroad. I can recall, here and in Europe, hundreds of men gifted at the outset of their career in art with almost as many varieties of expression and temperament. As time has gone on, many of these men have succumbed to the temptations of popular applause and temporary success. They have trimmed their effort to every varying wind that promised to land them in some haven of immediate success, havens whose land-locked harbours were preceded by dangerous shoals on which many of them have foundered.

But on either side of the Atlantic there

have been a score or more who have watched the compass left for their guidance by preceding navigators; they have not failed to consult the latest charts to which contemporary exploration has added new landmarks; but above all they have kept the watches day and night, their hands upon the rudder as, avoiding shoals and reefs, they have steered the bark of their endeavour safe to port.

To conclude, permit me to drop metaphor and repeat in simplest language the moral of this long discourse.

The way has been made easy to technical proficiency. Here in schools now established you can attain the skill of your craft by the means provided, if you are decently industrious, more completely than was possible anywhere in this country thirty years ago. Take and take freely all the knowledge that the study of nature, your instructors' precepts, or the observation of your comrades' work in solv-

ing your common technical problems will give you. But remember that this is but the beginning. Here you may learn *how* to paint; *what* to paint is the question which you, and you alone, can answer. There you must look into your heart and, once again, draw the thing as you see it, for the God of Things as They Are.

VI

OUR PRESENT AND OUR FUTURE

When the White City was built in 1893 art assumed a definite place in our national life. Then for the first time we awoke to a realisation that art of the people, by the people, for the people had come to us. It came to this New World of ours in the old historic way. From the seed sown in the Orient, through Greece, through Italy from Byzantium, wafted ever westward, its timid flowering from our Atlantic seaboard had been carried a thousand miles inland to find its first full eclosion; not as a single growth, but as the triple flower of architecture, painting, and sculpture.

And, as always, it fulfilled its mission of mind over matter. It was a foregone conclusion that the Columbian Exposition would show triumphantly our material power, would demonstrate the potentiality of our commerce, our agriculture, and our mechanical arts. Nor in the event were these lacking, but the millions who came to the exposition carried away as the one chief impression, as its most potent appeal, that of the triumph of art. From that day art has carried a new message to our people; since that day it has stood erect, has added to its stature, and now, still in its youth, it takes its place, a younger brother, but counting with its elders in the family of the art of the world.

Those who had watched the development of our art effort with jealous eye had already seen, at the Paris Exposition of 1889, that the progress for which all had hoped, and for which some had worked,

was marked, and then and there our foreign critics had acknowledged the promise of our art. But it was in Chicago, in 1893, that there was gathered for the first time a larger and more comprehensive exhibit of our painting and sculpture, and there, in frank comparison with typical collections of the work of other nations, our own more than redeemed that promise. We showed that since the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, in 1876, there had been begun and carried forward a school whose technical equipment evinced qualities that our earlier artists had not mastered, while, if for this merit we were indebted to the Old World, its expressional qualities were strongly marked by the influence of the New.

Since then in St. Louis, at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition of 1904, an even larger and more comprehensive showing of American work has been had, and this time all forms of our art were ex-

hibited, for the applied arts were included. Here again we met in friendly rivalry our brothers of the Old World, and again the healthy and growing merit of our work was such that we can look forward to our future with assured certainty that it is not for a day and a momentary sojourn that art has travelled westward.

Up to the time of the Columbian Exposition the whole signification of the word art, as understood by our people, and by many of our artists as well, was centred upon unrelated and independent works of painting and sculpture. Our architects, it is true, had already grown in numbers and the qualities of their work had, under the double stimulus of thorough training and abundant opportunity for practice, increasingly gained in structural and decorative merit. But it seldom occurred to our public to consider architecture as an art or its practitioners as artists. It remained, therefore,

for the triumphal exposition of their knowledge and inspiration at Chicago in 1893 to correct this error, and restore to the architect his place as an artist, and to his work the prouder title of mother of the arts.

For, to all who follow the arts and also to the general public, it was not the contents of the noble art palace which the genius of Charles Atwood had conceived —that still stands in its partial ruin in Jackson Park, Chicago, as one of the most beautiful buildings in the world— which was the most significant indication that a greater phase of art was disclosed to our people. No, precious as were many of the exhibits in the art galleries and in the other buildings of the exposition, it was not the jewels but the casket which contained them that satisfied the primordial hunger for beauty of all who saw them—which has remained in our memory as a beautiful vision since that day.

Nor was it the architect alone to whom was due our grateful admiration, though to him is due the stately order of the Court of Honour, the Peristyle, and the planning of the whole marvellous dream come true. True mother of the arts, Architecture had called in to her assistance her twin children, Painting and Sculpture, and, working together as they never had before in our land, they had produced a more glorious work of art than the modern world has seen before or since.

It was this alliance of the arts that was new to us, that opened before the artist a new field of endeavour, a larger, nobler employ than the conditions existing before this happy conjunction had accorded to his effort in this country.

A nobler employ, I insist, for if we pause to think a moment we must agree that the production of sculpture and painting has another and more important mis-

sion than merely to give pleasure, and that the artist scarcely fulfils his mission who only seeks to gratify some individual and exacting taste that may perchance lower his creative ideals.

Here I touch upon a delicate subject but one that is well worth consideration, if the artist is to count in the progressive civilisation of our future as he has counted in the past and is esteemed at present in the Old World. In the older days, I may be reminded, the artist was a courtier, and even more dependent than in modern times upon the patronage of the prince or noble whom he or his work served. This is true, but the older order that existed, before the French Revolution shook the foundation of class privilege from its base, took into account the necessity of the existence of a certain number of human beings, who were exempted from the ruder material labour of mankind, but who worked no less than they for

the benefit of the privileged few; who alone profited by the industry, material or spiritual, of the vast majority of the people. As the craft of the artist is subject to his spiritual endowment, its exercise is confined to those privileged by nature and thus they then were recognised as a class apart, with whom a prince could consort without derogation to his dignity; as Philip IV of Spain, the most absolute of monarchs, chose Velasquez as his intimate; as Rubens more than once was given ambassadorial rank to represent his country; as Charles V stopped to pick up the brush that Titian let fall, and reproved his scandalised courtiers by reminding them that it was within his power to make nobles, but God alone could create a Titian.

The old order changing has made every man work; no less the constitutional monarch of our time than the day labourer who digs the trenches of our canals,

lays the pipes of our sewers, or sweats in building the iron highways of our railroads. In this revolution of man's effort, the artist has suffered. We recognise the nobility of what we term useful labour, but in our modern view we too often relegate the effort of the artist to the sphere of luxury. I have already quoted from another the terse expression of a fundamental truth, to the effect that our average citizen can get along "quite comfortably" without art. In point of fact we know that this average citizen believes this to be true, however mistaken he may be and how little he may realise as yet the debt which he already owes to the sustained effort of the artist in this country. But in practice the average citizen leaves to his comparatively few fellow-citizens who have amassed large fortunes the entire recognition and encouragement of art. As I have already shown, the nations of the continent of Europe rec-

ognise and encourage their art by governmental measures, not alone for its civilising and spiritual effect, but for its commercial utility. This method has its dangers as well as its advantages, but, as it would be neither desirable nor possible under our Constitution, it need not be considered here.

In this country, of the comparatively few who, by reason of their fortune and their social importance, give their time or their money to the encouragement of art, there are some whose intelligence directs their efforts through a realisation that the highest efficiency of any civilisation, commercially or politically, has never been attained lacking art. To these men, and their number is increasing year by year, all honour is due, for they are useful citizens in every sense of the word.

But there still remain a perhaps greater number whose interest in art is more selfish, who, after their fortune is made,

purchase works of art in much the same manner and from the same motives as they acquire yachts and motor cars, as they build ostentatious palaces, or join the throng who scatter their surplus wealth in the pursuit of mundane joys in all the pleasure resorts of Europe and America. In fairness it must be said that occasionally the works of art which this type of man has acquired have had a saving grace of influence upon his character, for there resides in a great painting or statue, or even in the finer works of applied art, a certain spiritual and refining efficiency that may work wonders with a nature that has been almost exclusively occupied with the acquisition of material wealth.

But as a class these are the citizens whose influence upon the artist may be perilous however much his material prosperity might be enhanced by their frequentation; for in these circles he is only admitted at the price of flattering the

pride of the possessor of wealth, upon the same footing as those who to vend their wares are ready to modify its quality to any degree to suit the whim of the purchaser.

Again I am reminded that the artist must live, and that he would be wrong to hold himself aloof, when his work might exercise the refining and civilising influence to which I have testified, even if he be not driven by necessity to dispose of his production as best he may. But in the end the artist will profit, even commercially, if he holds his convictions firmly and refuses to modify the product of his brain to please a changing fashion or the mood of a moment which governs the newly fledged amateur who no longer, perhaps, is willing to acknowledge that he knows nothing about art, but retains his hold upon the other half of the hackneyed phrase, and is certain that he knows what he likes. Consequently, if the artist does not meet

with instant and full acceptance of his best effort, it is better that he should put his skill to some bread-winning and commercial demand if possible, to preserve the integrity of his convictions, and bide his time.

In all the various relations of the artist to the individual purchaser, he is subject to thus modify his production, for he is necessarily caught between the upper and nether millstones; upon the one hand he must live by his work, and upon the other his work must meet or create a demand. At the best, therefore, the principles above enumerated can only be applied in the measure to which every human endeavour is subject; by a series of compromises that, keeping the end in sight, aim to establish an increasingly higher standard with each succeeding effort.

This is to hark back once more to the days of the Columbian Exposition, for it

was there that was established a new outlet to the artist's endeavour, one that has since then seen in each succeeding year a new mile-stone added along the highway of progress toward this higher standard which we must strive unceasingly to attain. It began auspiciously for there was much of nobility in the universal agreement on the part of each individual connected with the enterprise to consider it patriotically, and subjugate all the prejudices of sectional or private interest to insure its success as a national effort.

This sentiment, I may say in passing, originated with the capitalists who provided the means for the activity of those who planned and carried out the unrivalled exposition buildings, but with these last it entailed greater sacrifice perhaps, for they were a band of men gathered from all parts of the country where they had each worked, every man for himself, ar-

chitects, painters, and sculptors, according to the principles imbibed from their various education, made stable by the lessons learned in their individual practice. With such material cohesion of effort and uniformity of aim might have seemed impossible, but in fact proved easy, so penetrated were one and all with the desire to make each personal contribution swell the sum of a harmonious common result. There must have been as well an instant recompense of joy for each subjugation of self, as every worker recognised how greatly his individual effort gained importance as an integral part of the whole.

The men were all inexperienced, even those of longest practice were only authors of isolated works, which, however important, played no part in a great comprehensive scheme like that on which they now entered. As this was true of the architects, it was even more applicable to the sculptors and painters, most of

whom then and there entered upon a phase of their career so strange to them that it was virtually a new element which came into their life and their practice.

We all know how triumphantly they succeeded, for though the buildings have vanished, though the sculptures of fountain, court, and terrace are gone, though the paintings of frieze and dome have been stripped away, their memory remains and the whole vast and beautiful conception still serves to illuminate the lives of all those who were permitted to see it.

Yet this existing and physical effect, however vividly it is retained in our memory or transmitted by description to unborn generations, is but a part, and a small part, of the service which this great exposition rendered to our art. Up to that time we had seen more than a century of art effort upon these shores. We had had good and earnest men,

"The Court of Honor," World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893

gifted in their craft, solicitous to implant its beneficence as a part of our national life, but at each step baffled by one of the very principles on which our Constitution is based, that forbids the encouragement of private interest at the public expense. They knew not less than we know to-day that no art could become stable and part of our national patrimony that was subject to private encouragement alone. They saw from year to year the fluctuations of individual taste as they saw our painting apparently hopelessly involved in the production of small easel pictures such as alone the comparatively small and generally ill-lighted houses that we built could harbour. They saw sculpture for the same reason limited to portrait busts or the rare statue of the statesman in broadcloth. They knew as well as we do now that in the more fortunate countries of the Old World art had been kept healthy and progressive

through the opportunities afforded to the artist to try his mettle with themes of larger scope. But they were too good Americans to wish, even if they could hope, to alter our prohibition against special encouragement of private interest which has made us one and all so sturdily individual.

With all their intelligence and their unquestionable devotion to art, however, these men never foresaw the simple solution of this problem, which the projectors of the White City solved in a day. We can no more have national or State legislative grants to encourage art societies, no matter how beneficent or educative their work may be considered, than by the same means we could subsidise a line of air-ships to the moon; but there is nothing in national or State constitutions to prevent the people of the country or a given State from purchasing any form of art that they may desire for public uses.

Thus the corporative and local organisation that made of the White City a national undertaking by its intelligence made clear and by its action established the means by which to-day we have an art of the people, by the people, for the people.

Together with this lesson of art the exposition had taught our land the duty of civic pride, and on every side in every locality of our country there began to arise monuments in the shape of courthouses, city halls, and libraries which were all touched with the grace of art by the hand of the architect, whose work in many cases was supplemented by that of the decorative sculptor and the mural painter. Closely following the work in Chicago, the Congressional Library in Washington offered an even larger field of opportunity. This building, which remains until to-day the greatest exposition of our decorative art, is at the same time the public monument of the United States

which receives annually the largest number of visitors.

This is significant, for when the artist complains of the sparse attendance at our regular art exhibitions, he should reflect that if the average exhibition held works of as much interest to our people as these decorations afford a larger attendance might result. There is much to say concerning the desirability of works which possess such interest making more frequent appearance in our exhibitions, for it is certain that when the American painter is not engaged in producing a mural painting or an illustration, he is too much disposed to limit his effort to a simple study, which may show brilliant technical qualities, but in which considerations of composition and of interest pertaining to the subject treated are not infrequently absent.

It is precisely this quality of public interest that our artists have excited in

their work for public buildings. It would appear paradoxical that in the measure that we had diminished our effort to please our public, we had succeeded in establishing a fuller comprehension of the artist's aim on the part of the people. An exhibition of painting and sculpture has always as some part of its reason for existence a desire to attract the public, however much our modern exhibitions, which appear to exist largely that we may show our fellow-craftsmen how cleverly we can paint or model, may fail in this endeavour.

But, to continue the paradox, the decorative sculptor or the mural painter has even more preoccupation of definite technical laws, different from but more exacting than those which the painter or sculptor of unrelated work obeys. The decorator's work must in line and mass be governed by its architectural setting, the artist is no longer free to do what he

will, he must do what best suits his environment. Not until this law is obeyed is he at liberty to think of his subject, or rather, his subject must be conceived in accordance with these architectural requirements. We must first please our architecture, if I may so use the phrase, before we please our public.

There is something so inherently noble in the solidity of construction, in the proportion and mass of a building, that subjects trivial in character, obscure or confused in conception are precluded from a decorator's selection, and his theme possesses greater general or typical interest for this reason. It is certain that so far in this country wherever the decorator has placed his work he has never failed to find an audience, where sometimes in the same cities the museums and art exhibitions excite but scant interest.

This, which, as already noted, is the

case with the Congressional Library, is equally true in Boston, where before the work of Sargent, Abbey, and Puvis de Chavannes, in the Public Library, can always be seen a throng of interested visitors. Nor in all these instances is the attraction due to the novelty of seeing our public buildings made beautiful by the hand of the artist, for these edifices have long ceased to be considered new in the changes which each day brings. In the case of some of our great hotels, like the Waldorf-Astoria or the Knickerbocker, in New York, which have been decorated, it has long been the custom to have special guides to conduct visitors through the house to view the interior, quite as the tourist abroad is conducted through the palaces of Fontainebleau or Versailles. It is also interesting, as a proof of the commercial utility of art, to quote a statement made by the proprietor of one of the largest of these hotels, to

the effect that the decorations therein had attracted more business and had cost comparatively the least of any of its features.

The list of civic and State buildings which have been made significant by the hand of the painter and sculptor in the past twenty years would be too long for inclusion here, but the desire to express our faith in our institutions and our pride in their development by such embellishment is not confined to any one section of the country. State capitols at points as far apart as St. Paul, Minnesota, and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, have been so decorated, while the court-houses and city halls of many large and small cities have seen new and more definite meaning given to the architect's expression of the civic sentiment of their various localities, by the added precision which pictorial representation can best lend.

Here we find probably the reason for the public interest which our mural

painting has never failed to elicit. We have long been accustomed to express our sense of civic, State, or even commercial dignity by the character of the buildings we erect. In these later years with the progress of our art these monuments have become increasingly beautiful and appropriate in design as the architect has gained in authority and executive ability. But at the best, the architect works in a material that is rebellious to a special or local expression. It is not alone the marble or granite of which his building is composed that necessarily limits his effort, but all the precedents established, all the rules by which his expression is governed.

The American architect may be asked to design a building for a locality which has a special industry or a local history of its own, but he is forced to work with the same material and embody his conception according to rules established

from time immemorial, in much the same manner as does the architect of to-day in London, Paris, or Berlin. Therefore he provides for this special locality a monument which, dignified and worthy though it may be, could be as well erected in any other place in America or Europe, for all that it would definitely express to the inhabitants of this given locality of a character that was distinctly their own.

This is not a defect in our architecture, to the mind of one who believes in traditions; on the contrary, there is something uplifting, which appeals to the imagination, to think that scattered over our vast territory are many beautiful buildings, erected in consonance with a prescribed order which, encircling the globe, links our new land to the nations of remotest antiquity, and makes our architect working in New York, Chicago, or Denver a direct descendant of him who reared the Parthenon.

But if we acknowledge our debt to the past, the present is nevertheless with us, and we can heartily approve of the citizen who, elected as a commissioner for a public building by the votes of his fellows, desires to secure for his town-hall or local court-house some expression of the typical character or the history of the locality.

I am here reminded of the description by one of our best-known architects of his missionary effort to instruct the building commission of the capitol of one of our States of the possibilities of mural decoration. For this purpose he had taken this commission to Washington and had conducted them to the Congressional Library. The members of the commission were much impressed. Their chairman and spokesman happened to be a rough farmer, untouched up to that time by any influence of art, endowed with shrewd common-sense and a knowledge of the constituency which he repre-

sented in the legislative body of his State. After a brief consultation with his fellow-commissioners, he addressed the architect: "Do you mean to tell us that we can have this sort of thing in our capitol at home without robbing our taxpayers?" He was assured that this could be done, and the architect, prepared for the occasion, told them how little had been the amount expended for the decorations of the library compared with the total cost of the building, the exact amount of the appropriation he would need to carry out his scheme for the embellishment of the new capitol, and the proportion that it would bear to the general tax levy of the State. "I should of course need a special appropriation for this purpose," concluded the architect. "Well, we will give it to you," answered the chairman, speaking for his colleagues, "but meanwhile you have a general appropriation which we thought of using

for elevators. Go ahead and spend that to begin this work at once. For my part I had rather see myself and all the members of the legislature back there walk upstairs the rest of our lives than miss having this sort of thing about us."

This again is art for the people, this again goes back to the very birth of art and follows the long chain that, with broken links here and there, has bound the best service of the artist close to his fellow-workers in the field of life since time began. Francis I of France rendered, in a certain way, a sorry service to art when he induced the great painters of Italy to furnish him works by them, which then for the first time were conceived and executed without relation to the surroundings in which they were to be seen. So far as this king was concerned, he promptly learned better, and as promptly induced the artists to come to France, where they executed the dec-

orations still in place in Fontainebleau, where we still go to study and admire.

For there reside in work, thus done for a special place, lit by a light for which the artist has suited his work, and enhanced by the setting which the architect has provided, qualities which the unrelated picture may possess, but which are liable to be diminished or lost by the accident of its placing in unharmonious surroundings. These are technical questions upon which any artist may ponder, though with the exception of the comparative few who have studied and profited by the conditions of mural painting, we have one and all become calloused in our sense of harmony by the practice of showing our work in the chance surroundings and inharmonious conditions of art exhibitions. A general exhibition is for the artist a necessary evil, imposed by the essentially modern habit of bringing together examples of art conceived by many

minds, executed in the most diverse manner, and then placed upon the walls of our galleries with only so much of harmonious grouping as the diversity of aim and accomplishment permits. The first examples of this habit only date from the period when it became the custom to collect works of art detached from or unrelated to their designed surroundings, and the general exhibitions were first held only about two hundred years ago—truly a modern habit when we consider the centuries of art effort.

The work of any artist would therefore gain technically if he could know its final disposition as regards its placing, the direction and quantity of light in which it was to be seen, and the colour and scale of its surroundings, all conditions which he can and does instinctively regulate in his studio during the production of his work, though he is forced to leave all these desirable and beneficial adjuncts

to his effort to the hand of chance when once his work leaves him.

But it is what I may call the moral effect of our art upon the people which has been enhanced by certain groups of decorative paintings or single examples that have become as much a part of existing public buildings as are the walls of which they are made. For there has come with them the sense of possession, and the average voter who has had his part in the appropriation for a building of this description looks at a mural painting that serves for its embellishment with another eye and another disposition of mind than he would if he stood before some example of art owned by a private individual whose vote was no more influential than his, but whose wealth was greater.

A few months ago I stood in one of the court-rooms of the Luzerne County Court-House, at Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania,

waiting as some workmen removed the scaffolding before a decorative panel which I had painted and of which, as it had just been fixed in place, I desired to judge the effect. As the painting was finally uncovered there strolled into the room one of the typical miners of the section, bearing many marks of his toil upon his person, despite the change from his working-clothes, gaunt and loose-limbed—in a word, the last person in the world from whom I should have expected a word of encouragement for my effort, of influence upon my art. Together we looked at the work upon which I had passed many anxious months, he not having the slightest suspicion that I was its author, and each of us studying it from very different stand-points undoubtedly. At last after an apparently minute inspection, during which I trust that he discovered several features of the work that were typical of the region

and its interests, he turned to me and exclaimed, with an oath, "Well, I suppose that picture makes me a bit poorer, for it's paid for by the people of this county, but *somehow I'm glad it's there*." I let him depart without informing him that I had painted the panel, but I have since regretted that I did so, for I might have told him with truth that, coming as it did, his appreciation counted for more than that of critics more informed. I could also have quieted any fears that he might have entertained as to the cost of decorations of this character by quoting one of the most influential, far-seeing, and devoted of the men who have devoted their lives to building up an art interest in towns which but for their activity and intelligence would have remained for years to come without its civilising influence.

This man was engaged in a campaign that aimed at securing a large endow-

ment for the city art museum which, as it was to be levied from public funds, demanded a popular vote from the citizens. He therefore undertook to instruct his public concerning the benefit to be derived from this measure, and in a series of popular talks addressed to all classes of society his missionary labours took him to all descriptions of places, including as a last resort the bar-rooms and beer saloons. In these last he used a most convincing argument in proving by exact calculation that to furnish an endowment of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year the man who was taxed on one thousand dollars of property would be required to pay twenty cents a year—*the price of four glasses of beer*. I presume that my Wilkes-Barre miner may have contributed indirectly about two cents toward the decoration of his court-house, but it was sufficient to give him the right to consider a noble

building and all that it contained as his own—sufficient for an American artist to work for him and be proud of the employ!

Of my own first works in decoration I need say but little, for, like nearly all our men, I entered the field with a better preparation of hope than of experience. It is true that I had enjoyed more training than some of my colleagues, for the year passed with Mr. La Farge had given me the opportunity of solving a number of minor decorative problems. For that matter, among my compatriots, comrades of an earlier time in Paris, I remember none save Saint-Gaudens (who of course was not a painter) who showed the same interest as I in work of a decorative character, although in the years of my sojourn there France saw a revival of interest in mural painting which has been as productive there as has its new birth with us. Some of the best examples of Puvis

de Chavannes saw the light in these years, and as I have already related, the completion of Paul Baudry's decoration for the New Opera was hailed as a national event.

Works like these, as I look back, undoubtedly gave the type and showed the possibility of our effort here later on, but at the time of their production I knew no one in my student world, with the exception of myself, who was sufficiently optimistic to believe that in our time we should see an effort similar at least in aim, gain foothold, develop, and grow as it has in this country.

I am minded, however, that of the numbers of students, and as well the artists of my country, comparatively few have the desire to devote their effort to mural painting. In fact to-day in our exhibitions and among artists in general the work of the decorator is looked upon as a thing apart—I had almost said, a spe-

cialisation that hardly enters the realm of painting.

If my argument has been followed, however, I think that I have shown that until two hundred years ago nearly all painting and most of the sculpture was executed for a special place, subject to the conditions under which the work was to be seen, much of it even being absolutely executed in place, though our habit of collecting has since wrested many of these works from their primitive setting, sometimes very much to their disadvantage. Other times, other manners may be urged against any desire to see these original conditions re-established. Undoubtedly our modern habit of building our homes, and even our public buildings, not for all time but with an acceptance of the possibility of a not remote future change, militates against a renewal of this ancient habit. But I can hardly imagine that an artist exists who would not be glad to see

his work placed where it would be undisturbed for five years in surroundings of his own choice, or who, having the opportunity of so placing his work, would not be glad to modify his production to harmonise with such conditions. This appears almost elementary, for it is thus that the artist executes his work in his own studio, carefully removing from its vicinity other works of his own that in tone or colour fail to harmonise with it.

Moreover, there are certain signs of these later times that show that the artist is waking to the absurdity of carefully considering these questions during the execution of his work and then launching it on the troubled sea of chance in our crowded exhibitions. Note the prevalence of what are called "one-man exhibitions," where the artist shows only his own work, each example carefully placed so that one may harmonise with the other, with ample

space between so that no jarring note of colour, no conflict may ensue.

When some of us advocate the establishment of great exhibitions like the Paris Salon on this side of the Atlantic, it is a compromise, a necessary evil that we would bring about to gain the greater good of showing our public the measure of our achievement, and by this means advancing the day when our native art may be appreciated and properly encouraged by some diversion of the interest by which our people are virtually keeping alive the art of half the world—outside of our own country.

Even in thus planning, we are dreaming, practical dreamers that we are, of having galleries so spacious that all works exhibited may be properly shown, so that our present inharmonious grouping may be reduced to order and the day of picture crowding picture, frame touching frame, with sculpture huddled in spaces

wherever room can be found, may cease. Nor does my advocacy for all possible consideration of the work of art as a part of a definite setting in any way preclude the participation of the painter of any form of easel picture in this happy revival of ancient conditions. Time was when the family portraits were placed in the framing of the panelled room, and to-day if the portrait painter would ask his client for a definite place in his house and then paint the portrait to fit that place, in tone and composition as well as in size, both the artist and the sitter would gain by this return to earlier methods. This in fact has been done occasionally within recent years since the fashion of "period" rooms has set in, and always with happy result.

Again a large part of modern mural painting has been distinguished by the use of landscape as an important adjunct; landscape treated as none of the older

decorators embodied it in their work. There are few of Puvis de Chavannes's works, for instance, from which the figures could not be removed, still leaving a beautiful tapestry-like decoration composed of landscape pure and simple.

Little use has so far been made by our landscape painters of this new field of effort, or rather our architects are so governed by precedent that the service of landscape, decoratively composed and painted with observance of architectural conditions, has not been called to perform the part for which it is eminently fitted. That this could, and probably will, be done seems evident, and there as always the work of the artist would gain, as every human effort gains, by ceasing to be unrelated and becoming a part of a whole where every element is combined, each part helping the other, even as humanity from the first has found it necessary to combine individual efforts

to make more effective the general effort of civilisation.

It is through such means, it appears to me, that art can best force an entrance into the lives of our American people, who have been forced in the past by material conditions to conquer a foothold on a new continent and whose institutions were established by a race which had banished art from its scheme of life, from an idea, conceived in error, that it was merely a dependence of a religion against which they rose in revolt.

But art is inevitable, for man craves its service the moment that he pauses in his labour and looks to the beauty in the world about him. I have described how it is beginning to infiltrate, slowly but surely, from the ancient source of all art, through the embellishment of our buildings and the assistance of the "mother of arts," into the lives of the most humble. Hundreds of thousands of our people—

this is not an over-statement—already transact the business of their lives in law-courts, town-halls, or other public buildings in this country, in surroundings which have been touched by the grace of art. Of these how many, think you, can we attract to our museums or art exhibitions, except on rare occasions and with a somewhat weary desire to acquire a taste for art, from which nearly every element of their daily life or past ancestry has kept them, as from a thing apart, the concern of a few. But it is the man who reads as he runs who is affected perhaps almost unconsciously by the art thus given over to the people, which has become their property, and this eventually they will care for as a precious possession of their own. The Greek utensils of household life, which we treasure, for their design, in our museums along with the nobler sculpture of their greater artists, came into being and into daily use from an ap-

preciation of beauty that had grown, not from the establishment of museums or art exhibitions, but from works of art that were wrought for the multitude and that were placed where the man paving the street or entering the public bath could see them.

Our modern conditions demand our museums and our exhibitions, but it is significant in all our cities that of those who visit them, the days when they are thronged by visitors, on the free days, the great majority are our transplanted citizens of Italian birth. They have been brought up under precisely the same conditions as those which I believe are being slowly established here, where the walls of their public buildings carry to them the message of art, where the statue in the public place, the fountain at the street corner speak to them in the same universal and appealing language.

My miner in Wilkes-Barre was well on

his way to appreciate the best service that art can render, as was the farmer chairman of the legislative committee which had been given the power to render the mute walls of their State capitol eloquent of the history of the past and the aspirations for the future for their whole commonwealth; but I doubt if either of them could have been lured into a museum or an art exhibition.

This in broad general lines appears to me to be the present state of the arts here at home. Time lacks for a more particular view of all its various manifestations of which I have been the fortunate witness in my life, but upon the conditions stated I base my hope for the greater diffusion and the continued progress of all the arts of design until they have become an integral part of our national life. I trust that I may say that these conclusions are the fruit of much thought and considerable experience—and I am glad to

add that the hope declared is of the most optimistic description.

There remain to be expressed: first of all my sincere gratitude that I should have been permitted, under the conditions of the Scammon foundation, to express these views publicly; my equally sincere thanks for the attention accorded me by the students and members of the Art Institute at the time of the original delivery of these lectures; and some word, not of apology but of explanation, that the measure in which, under the circumstances, it appeared that I could be of the most service to students and to those interested in the problems of art was by the frank recital of my own experiences and the frequent use of the personal pronoun I.

To a larger audience let me reiterate that what the youngest as well as the oldest servant of the arts in the United States has before him is the task of raising not

only the standard of our work, but of our aim. We are yet too much children, pleased with a new toy and too prone to believe that the end is attained when we are only fairly on the way. In this our technical acquirements are the tools of our trade, and we cannot have them too sharp and keen to carry out the work we have to do, but we must first plan our work and for that something more is required than correctness of eye and facility of hand.

Therefore every element that goes to the making of character, every force that we can bring to bear to widen our knowledge will help us to know our possibilities and do something to break down the barriers of our limitations. The great artists of the past were men of broad sympathies, and the man of to-day must not expect the world to come to him, but like them must go out to the life about him, share in its interests, endeavour to

choose between those that are transitory and local and those that are typical and human, and translate these last into the language of art. The world is more filled with thinking men and women to-day than it was in the most brilliant epochs of the old days of art, and they will listen—only you must have something to say.

You may say it by a well-designed chair or a monumental building, by a modest drawing or a vast canvas, by a well-modelled door-knob or a colossal group—great artists whom we honour as of one family have done all these things in the past—and you may win honour in their doing, and find much joy by the way.

The way is long at the best, there is no greater lesson to learn, and to impart in turn, in this land of quick and partial results, and it is one to which fortune is denied, for fortune never comes to the man who works with his hands. But it has

more gratification than any life I know. It is well to acknowledge this, for if you have the vocation and the whole world asserted the contrary, you could not be dissuaded from it.

"This is the life we have chosen; well, the choice was mad, but I should make it again"; was the profession of faith made to me by that true artist Robert Louis Stevenson.

And though the way be long, we may take heart of grace in reflecting that art knows no age, that to-day or fifty years hence its inexhaustible problems will lure you on as they did Titian, who, dying at ninety-nine, felt that he was on the point of doing something worthy, or, as they lured that other great, little artist, the Japanese Hokusai, who warns his admirers that all the work he did before seventy was merely childish effort, and that before ninety he could hardly hope to do anything that was worth their attention.

And so, with this cheerful outlook we may separate, each intent upon doing his best in his own way, youth to the school and the future beyond, I back to my studio, with something more behind me, but not without abiding hope in the future—and so—courage—and farewell.

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